





## JPA warning to 3 weekly tabloids stirs controversy

By Sa'eda Kilani  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Three weekly newspapers, two of which have the largest circulation rate among all tabloids in Jordan, have come under heavy attack from the Jordan Press Association (JPA).

Shihani, Al Bilad and Hawadeth Al Sa'ah are accused of overstating facts and publishing material that "fringe upon the general ethics and moral standards."

In a memo sent to the chief editors of the weeklies, the JPA threatened to refer them to a disciplinary council if they refuse to comply with the association's laws and regulations.

A study carried out by the JPA's council over the past two months on issues selected randomly from the three weeklies found that the newspapers are publishing "fabricated stories, obscene photos and inaccurate news."

The JPA argues that Article 40-a of the Press and Publications Law of 1993 bans the publication "of any news, reports, letters and photos that are in contradiction with the general ethics and morals."

JPA President Suleiman Qudus cited Article 50-a of the law makes journalists liable for prosecution if they did not comply with the law or any other law that is related to the journalism profession.

Mr. Qudus said the association would take punitive measures if the three weeklies continue to publish news and photos that are incompatible with the accepted norms and morals.

Even the language used is inappropriate, said Mr. Qudus. "There is a tremendous exaggeration and overstatement of facts and issues," he said.

Ali-Irzan, managing editor of Hawadeth Al Sa'ah, says this is not true. "I challenge everyone if they can find a fabricated story or crime published in our newspaper," he said.

Jihad Momani, managing editor of Shihani, also refuted the allegations. He says the crime page in the weekly tabloid is translated from a German newspaper but dates and names have not been changed. Publishing photos mainly of semi-naked women is not part of the newspaper's policy either, he said.

"There was once a mistake when a coloured photo of a woman was published in black and white. It made her look as if she were not wearing anything," he said.

Mr. Momani admitted this was not the only time. The weekly, with a circulation over 65,000, also published photos of women on Eilat beach a couple of months ago.

But Mr. Momani said he did not believe that this was the reason behind the JPA's attack on the three weeklies.

"It's because we are an opposition newspaper that they target us," he asserted. "Because people like and buy our newspaper, the so-called colleagues (who work for other newspapers) have a certain interest (in fighting us)."

Since its establishment in 1983, Shihani has been a favourite platform for the opposition. Deputy Toujan Faisal, former deputies Mansour Murad and Fakhri

Kawar as well as independent Islamist Osama Alkhan have all been given the forum and even the advantage of having weekly columns to express their views vis-a-vis the government's policies and practices. Former Health Minister Abdul Rahim Malhas chose Shihani when he wanted to publish information concerning corruption in the health sector.

Shihani is also known for its harsh criticism and sarcastic caricatures of government officials, their policies and practices. Humorous anecdotes involving senior officials are the newspaper's speciality for pages 2 and 3.

Crimes, accidents and corruption cases are favoured by Shihani's administration over "unimportant" political stories.

"Shihani tries to expose government malpractices and corruption to the public," Mr. Momani said. "We are interested in the issues that are of interest to the people. Readers would be more interested in a bus accident that took the life of tens of people than in the visit of some foreign diplomatic team to the country."

The Islamic weekly Al Sa'ah was the first to announce the JPA's attack on the three weeklies. Its editor-in-chief and member of the JPA's board, Hilmi Al Asmar, said the association was very reluctant to make such a decision.

"It was after countless complaints and continued research that we decided to make a move," Mr. Asmar said. "Such fabricated and immoral news have a bad influence on the public. We have received numerous complaints from the public protesting the publication of such photos and news that might be harmful to their children."

"The media should present to the public what they need to solve problems instead of publishing a photo of a naked (woman) that makes us sick," he said.

Nidal Mansour, chief editor of Al Bilad, says the JPA cannot make a final judgement. What is moral or immoral is relative from one person to another, he said.

"Infringing upon the general ethics" is too general a term. I would not consider a woman wearing a short skirt as "infringing upon the general ethics," Mr. Mansour said. Al Bilad has a distribution rate of about 15,000 to 20,000.

Mr. Mansour said the association should not have taken any decision against the three weeklies without discussing it first with the chief editors of the publications. He accused the association of having ulterior motives.

"Why would the JPA take a move now?" he questioned. "Why didn't they take an action when more important issues were at stake?"

Mr. Mansour said the association did not help journalists when the Press and Publications Department took some of them to court after the introduction of democracy in Jordan in 1989.

He claimed the association was not acting on its own initiative. He implied the government might be influencing the JPA's move "to muzzle freedom of speech under the slogan of protecting public freedoms."



RECONSTRUCTION: Hisham Karamah, pyrotechnician Solidere, the society for reconstruction of Beirut, gives orders by mobile phone before the destruction of a building in the old city centre of Beirut. France Telecom and Finland telecom companies fight over the Lebanese market of the private mobile telephony, a must to compensate the lack of public phones (AFP photo)

## Jordanian businessmen to get familiarisation lectures on GSP

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordanian businessmen are expected to be given a detailed insight into how to take advantage of the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) that developed countries offer to developing countries during a three-day seminar to be held in Amman this month.

The Jan. 22-24 seminar, scheduled to be held at the Chamber of Industry in Jabal Amman, is organised by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and will be the second of its kind to take place in Jordan. The first was held in 1991.

"International experts in GSP will deliver lectures and seek to familiarise Jordanian exporters with the advantages of the system and how they could use it to their benefit," said Nadia Haddad, a senior official of the Chamber of Industry.

"We believe that it is a very important event for Jordanian exporters and we hope that there would be strong and positive response to the invitations that we have sent out," Ms. Haddad said.

The GSP is designed to help exporters from developing countries to offer competitive prices in the markets of developed countries by reducing customs duties on their exports at the time of

entry to the importing developed country.

While the system is relatively simple, there it also lays down a series of conditions and requirements that the exporter should meet to qualify for the preferential treatment, Ms. Haddad said. Jordan is a member of the agreement of GSP.

According to officials, Jordanian exporters have not been able to fully take advantage of the available opportunity mostly because they were not fully aware of its various aspects, a shortcoming that is expected to be addressed at the Jan. 22-24 seminar in Amman.

Nearly 20 countries from the developed world are signatories to the GSP accord, making it an attractive avenue to boost exports if exporters are willing to abide by the guidelines and part of the agreement.

The Italian government is financing the seminar. A 32-member Italian team representing the Arab-Italian Chamber of Commerce on the third day of the event and try to familiarise the audience with the Italian experience with GSP. Ms. Haddad told the seminar.

In addition to UNCTAD officials, lecturers addressing the seminar would include American European experts in international trade practices related to GSP and Japanese.

In the opinion of World Bank experts, limitations

adopted by most industrial countries and peculiar features of the economic policies of beneficiaries of the system, the developing countries have not gained much from GSP. They point out that the imports of the U.S., a signatory to the GSP accord, from GSP beneficiary countries are less than half of its overall imports from developing countries and less than 15 per cent of the trade covered under GSP are extended preferential treatment in customs duties.

Recent studies have also found that imports into the European Union countries from non-GSP developing countries were growing at a faster rate than those from countries covered under GSP.

The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which has been updated into the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to which Jordan is seeking entry, allows GSP trade under controlled conditions, however, the scope of improving trade under GATT/WTO is seen much more attractive to the developing countries rather than confining themselves to GSP.

Despite the limited international impact of GSP, Jordan stands to benefit from the system since the Kingdom has enough room to manoeuvre, given the relatively low level of its utilisation of the agreement.

## Baghdad blast kills 12-year-old

BAGHDAD (R) — A bomb hidden in a tin killed a 12-year-old Iraqi boy in a residential area of Baghdad, Babel newspaper said on Monday.

The explosion on Sunday afternoon tore the child's body apart, said the newspaper, which is owned by President Saddam Hussein's son Uday.

It blamed the blast on "criminals" but did not say who was behind the first such explosion of the New Year.

"The child was playing with a tin thrown in the area in which the criminals with ransom against our people had hidden the explosive charge," Babel said.

It said the explosion "ripped the body of this innocent child apart."

Babel said the blast took place in Al Sha'ib townships in Baghdad.

The explosion was not reported by the official Iraqi News Agency (INA) or by state-run newspapers, television or radio.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attack. In the past Iraq has pointed the finger at Israeli agents or Iran.

In October last year a bomb exploded in a prayer room at Iraq's Ministry of Religious Affairs, killing a senior official and seriously wounding five people.

## Technical problem caused Iran plane crash - black box

TEHRAN (AFP) — Technical difficulties caused the crash of an Iranian air force plane which killed 12 people including Iran's air force chief, according to the plane's black box.

Conversations recorded on the box revealed the pilot had told the control tower at Isfahan he had "felt vibrations in the plane's windows several minutes after take-off, raising the possibility that one of the engines was dead," the official Iranian news agency IRNA said.

The plane, a U.S.-made Star Jet, was on a flight Thursday from the central city of Isfahan to Tehran, but it turned back shortly after take-off.

It caught fire before crash-landing at Shahid Babai military air base in Isfahan.

Officials have said the pilot had noticed changes in the air pressure in the cockpit after the plane reached an altitude of 700 metres and tried to make an emergency landing.

Iranian newspapers and several deputies have demanded an explanation into the crash.

Apart from the air force commander General Mansour Sattari, five top air force officials were killed along with six crewmen.

Iranian leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was among thousands of people attending the ceremony in front of an air force base in eastern Tehran.

Political, military and religious officials also attended the funeral.

Mourners carried the coffin, draped in the Iranian

flag and decorated with flowers, for several kilometres.

The bodies were then taken by helicopter to the mausoleum of the founder of the Islamic Republic, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, in southern Tehran for prayer and several of them on to nearby Behesht-e Zahra cemetery for burial.

Other victims were to be buried in their hometowns. The Tehran bazaar worked only a half-day in a gesture of mourning and the Iranian flag flew at half-mast throughout the country.

A member of parliament, Ali Movahedi Savaji, called on transportation and intelligence officials to provide an "acceptable explanation" for the crash.

The National Security Council, the country's high-

est political and military decision-making body headed by President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, convened on Saturday to discuss the issue.

On Sunday, newspapers questioned the safety of air travel in Iran, with one charging that the country had a "disaster every season."

A Fokker F-28 civilian airliner crashed while on a flight from Isfahan to Tehran last October, killing 66 people.

"When the highest brass of the air force lose their lives in a crash, it is natural that the ordinary citizens would be apprehensive about travelling by air," said the English-language Iran News.

The daily Salam demanded that the authorities reveal the "main cause" of the crash.

## Lady fights to save Beirut from bulldozers

BEIRUT (AFP) — Lady Yvonne Cochrane and her Association for the Protection of Ancient Sites and Homes are waging an uphill struggle to save old Beirut from the bulldozers of post-war reconstruction.

The group, known by its French acronym APSAD, is back in business after a paralysis during the 1975-1990 civil war and its members now meet again in her 19th century palace, which itself bears scars from the conflict.

"Beirut was once a jewel of the Mediterranean. It has become a garbage dump," Lady Cochrane said bluntly.

"The Lebanese have become like demented ants. They're building without restraint, and as a result we're covering the country with shantytowns. We're killing Lebanon," she told AFP.

Born to the wealthy Lebanese Snouk family, a widow of an Irish lord, Lady Cochrane is highly critical of the post-war reconstruction projects, especially in the city centre of Beirut.

She denounced the belief of many that Beirut is destined to become a new Hong Kong.

"This dream does not correspond to reality: the Lebanese are not big businessmen but excellent merchants," said Lady Cochrane, adding she was "sometimes discouraged but still hopeful."

APSAD, whose executive committee includes architects, bankers, businessmen and art lovers, is fighting "for our roots," she said, denying it was elitist.

"We have lost our roots. Our fight is not just to save some old stones, it's a battle for the environment, for a better quality of life."

"If we must rebuild, it should be done in the appropriate manner," she insisted, charging that builders were only interested in financial gains.

"We're surrounded by concrete. There are no public parks or private gardens left. It's tragic for children and for

the future."

Her group has limited financial means to confront what Lady Cochrane described as the "archaeological massacre" of Beirut and its "ignoramus municipality."

The government has promised APSAD \$12,000 in annual assistance but the group counts more on the press to stop bulldozers from destroying the last buildings of the old Beirut to make way for modern buildings.

"We have nothing left but persuasion," she said.

Prime Minister Rafik Hariri — the key backer of Lebanon's multi-billion reconstruction projects — altered a large part of his initial plan for the city centre after facing criticism from abroad, Lady Cochrane said.

"After the destruction of several splendid houses, in the city centre, he protected a considerable number of other buildings," she said.

According to Lady Cochrane, some 200 old buildings have been spared destruction by Solidere, the company in charge of rebuilding Beirut city centre and in which Mr. Hariri is a key shareholder.

Lady Cochrane admitted however that despite being staunchly opposed to Solidere's plans, she has started to cooperate with the firm's French advisor, Jean-Paul Lebas.

Her next step is to rally around APSAD the assistance of bankers and industrialists in an effort to finance the rehabilitation of her city.

"Five to six years from now, Lebanon will be hit by a tragic real estate crisis because all these buildings being erected are destined to remain empty."

"But this crisis will work to our advantage. That is when we can really rebuild properly and Lebanon could once again become the garden of the Middle East," she predicted.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Body found in dam reservoir

AMMAN (Petra) — A civil defence team on Monday pulled out the body of an unidentified man aged about 55 years from the King Talal Dam reservoir, the Civil Defence Department (CDD) said. It said local officials employed at the dam by the Jordan Valley Authority had spotted the body. No details were available.

### Jury selection begins in New York trial

NEW YORK (AFP) — Lawyers began questioning potential jurors under tight security about their religious beliefs and their views on Islam Monday for the trial of a dozen people accused of plotting to bomb New York landmarks. The first day of jury selection opened in the downtown Manhattan court, where Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman and 11 others accused in the case will stand trial. City police conducting intensive searches were backed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, who have been guarding Judge Michael Mukasey and prosecutors for the past two months.

### Iranian minister slams Iraqi policy

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Mohammad Hashemi on Monday slammed Iraq's policy towards its Gulf neighbours at the start of a three-day visit to Kuwait. "Baghdad's continuing policy of destabilisation in the region does not benefit any state in the Gulf, including Iraq, in the search for peace and stability," the official Kuwaiti agency KUNA quoted Mr. Hashemi as saying here. He said Iran's relations with Iraq were "not satisfactory," and urged Baghdad to implement U.N. Security Council resolutions relating to the 1991 Gulf war in which Iraqi forces were ousted from Kuwait. "We back these resolutions and Iraq, which has recognised the sovereignty of Kuwait, must conform to all the other international demands," Mr. Hashemi said, adding that Tehran rejected "any changes to the borders in the Gulf region."

JORDAN TELEVISION	
Tel: 773111-19	
PROGRAMME TWO	
17:00	Polka
17:30	Que Le Mieux Gagne
18:00	Embenquement Forte 1
18:30	Le Intrepide
19:00	News in French
19:30	Practical Guide to the Universe
19:45	Varities
20:00	The Detectives
20:30	The Law and Harry McGraw
21:00	Egoun
22:00	News in English
22:30	Wild Pines
23:10	The Piglet Files
PRAYER TIMES	
05:10	Fajr
06:30	Shurrah Dahr
12:45	Dhuhr
16:20	Asr
16:52	Maghreb
18:14	Isha
CHURCHES	
St. Mary of Nazareth Church, Swiffield, Tel. 810740	
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 637785	
St. Joseph Church, Tel. 624590	
Church of the Annunciation, Tel. 637440	
De la Salle Church, Tel. 661757	
Terrence Church, Tel. 623466	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 625441	
Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543	
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 71331	
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 77261	
St. Epiphane Church Tel. 771751	
Armenian International Church Tel. 625226	
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624328	
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 684195	
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 649322	
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675591	
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295	
WEATHER	
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.	
No change in weather conditions is expected. Winds will be southeasterly moderate with clouds appearing at different altitudes. In Aqaba, it will be warm with winds northerly moderate and sea calm.	
Min./Max. temp.	
Amman	4/15
Aqaba	10/20
Desert	3/16
Jordan Valley	10/20
Yesterday's high temperatures:	

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR	
Amman 15, Aqaba 19. Humidity readings: Amman 48 per cent, Aqaba 65 per cent.	
USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS	
NIGHT DUTY	
AMMAN:	
Dr. Nasser Ibrahim	452935
Dr. Youssef Rashid	892301
Dr. Jamil Tarif	794710
Dr. Fayez Al Dabbas	759153
Firas pharmacy	661912
Fertons pharmacy	733336
Al Asma pharmacy	637053
Nairoki pharmacy	623672
Al Salan pharmacy	636730
Tacoub pharmacy	644943
Shawar pharmacy	637640
Nairoki pharmacy	623672
Najib pharmacy	847632
IRBID:	
Dr. Akram Momani	248795
Aleqah pharmacy	(-)
ZARQA:	
Dr. Hussein Al Haj	983444
Khalifah pharmacy	983411
EMERGENCIES	
Food Control Centre	637111
Civil Defence Department	651111
Civil Defence Emergency	630341
Rescue Police	192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade	217401
Blood Bank	775121
Highway Police	843402
Traffic Police	890390
Public Security Department	630321
Hotel Complaints	602800
Price Complaints	661176
Water and Sewerage	897467
Complaints	787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance)	121
Overseas Calls	010230
Central Amman Telephone	623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs	661101
Jordan Television	773111
Radio Jordan	774111
Water Authority	680100
Jordan Electricity Authority	815615
Electric Power Company	636381
HOSPITALS	
AMMAN:	
Hussein Medical Centre	813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn	644214
Al-Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn	644214
Jabal Amman Maternity	642362
Malhas, J. Amman	635140
Palatine, Shamsi	664171/4
Shamsi Hospital	649131
University Hospital	645945
Al-Masr Hospital	66727/9
Al-Bashir, J. Amman	644164/6
Al-Bashir, J. Amman	777101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Amman	775111/26
Army, Marfa	891611/15
Queen Abla Hospital	866100
Amal Hospital	874159
FOR THE TRAVELLER	
QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT	
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (06) 522000, 5, where it should always be verified.	
ARRIVALS	
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)	
04:00	Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
07:20	Damascus (RJ)
07:30	Amman (RJ)
09:30	Abu Dhabi (RJ)
09:40	Moscow, Dubai (RJ)
10:15	Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
10:30	London (RJ)
10:45	Frankfurt (RJ)
10:50	Paris (RJ)
11:30	Chicago, Amsterdam (RJ)
DEPARTURES	
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)	
07:20	Amman (RJ)
08:15	Amman, New York (RJ)
11:00	Montreal, Toronto (RJ)
11:30	Vienna, Brussels (RJ)
11:45	Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
12:00	Paris (RJ)
12:30	London (RJ)
12:45	Frankfurt (RJ)
12:50	Calais (RJ)
13:00	Luxembourg (RJ)
13:30	Jeddah (RJ)
14:45	Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)



AY, JANUARY 10, 1995  
to save  
bulldozers  
the future.  
Her group has  
financial means to  
what Lady Cochran  
described as the "atrocious  
massacre" of Beirut.  
The government has  
signed a municipal  
APPSAD \$12,000  
annual assistance but  
group counts more on  
press to stop bulldozers  
destroying the last  
of the old Beirut to make  
for modern buildings.  
"We have nothing left  
persuasion," she said.  
Prime Minister Rafiq  
Hariri — the key backer  
of the multi-billion  
dollar reconstruction project  
— has a large part of  
the city facing criticism  
for the destruction.  
After the destruction  
of the city centre, he  
considerable number of  
buildings," she said.  
According to the  
Lachman, some 100  
buildings have been  
destroyed by soldiers  
company in charge of  
building Beirut city  
and in which Mr. Hariri  
is shareholder.  
Lady Cochran  
however, despite her  
entirely opposed to  
her plans, she has  
cooperate with the  
French advisor, Jean-  
Luc Lebas.  
"We have proposed  
plans to safely  
entire neighbourhood  
destroyed and he has  
agreed," she said.  
Her next step is to  
ground APPSAD the  
presence of bankers and  
real estate in an effort to  
the rehabilitation of  
Beirut.  
"Five to six years  
to go," Lebas will be  
highly realistic estate  
crisis as these build-  
ings are not a decision  
to be made.  
"But this crisis will  
not be an advantage. That  
is the real reality. Beirut  
and Lebanon could  
gain because the  
Middle East," she  
said.

**BRIEF**

**Reservoir**  
A team of  
engineers from  
the Ministry of  
Water has  
started work on  
the construction  
of a new  
reservoir in the  
Jabal Amman  
area. The  
project is  
expected to  
be completed  
within six  
months.

**Iraqi policy**  
The Ministry of  
Foreign Affairs  
has announced  
that it will  
continue to  
maintain its  
policy of  
non-interference  
in the internal  
affairs of Iraq.  
The ministry  
stated that it  
will continue to  
support the  
efforts of the  
Iraqi government  
to restore  
order and  
stability in the  
country.

**Amman (U.S.)**  
The U.S. State  
Department has  
announced that  
it will provide  
\$10 million in  
aid to the  
Jordanian  
government for  
the reconstruction  
of the country.  
The aid is part  
of a larger  
package of  
\$50 million that  
the U.S. has  
committed to  
provide to Jordan  
over the next  
five years.

**HAZ RAILWAY**  
The Hazz Railway  
Company has  
announced that  
it will start  
operating a  
new train  
service between  
Amman and  
Irbid. The  
service is  
expected to  
be completed  
within three  
months.

**MARKET PRICES**  
The following  
table shows the  
market prices  
for various  
commodities in  
Jordan for the  
week ending  
January 10, 1995.



**TAKING THE OATH:** Newly-appointed Jordanian Ambassador to Iraq Bassam Qaqish Monday takes the oath of office before His Majesty King Hussein at the Royal Court, while Mohammad Saeed Abu Nawar, ambassador to Switzerland, waits to take his turn. The swearing-in ceremony was attended by Chief of the Royal Court Marwan Al Qasbi (Petra photo)

### Choice of social development minister important to Jordan's poor, unemployed

By Saad Silawi  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — If the choice of ministers of foreign affairs, information, tourism and others was an important task for Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, so was the choice of minister of social development because the new government is in need of every potential help to deal with the basic responsibility of curtailing poverty in Jordan.

The Ministry of Social Development cares for 220,000 needy people assuming that each of the 45,000 poor families in Jordan comprises five persons only. Of these, an estimated 40 per cent live below the poverty line and are in most urgent need for help.

The outgoing Ministry of Social Development has doubtless worked arduously and relentlessly to overcome the problem of poverty, but these efforts require follow-up and extra endeavours to help attain the goal of eradicating or decreasing the level of poverty.

Before leaving office, in an interview Saturday, outgoing Minister of Social Development Mohammad Saeed Abu Nawar provided figures showing the rate of poverty in the Kingdom.

According to Dr. Saeed, the rate of poverty in Jordan stands at 14.5 per cent of the total number of population of nearly four million by the end of 1994, down from 18 per cent last year, 21.5 per cent in 1992 and 30 per cent in 1991.

The 30 per cent rate estimate was provided by the United Nations agencies in the aftermath of the Gulf war, which hit Jordan hard; one has to remember here that the rate of poverty in 1987 stood at 18.5 per cent of the total population.

Before bowing out of power, the government of Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali pledged before Parliament that the next government would try to reach as many as 75 per cent of the total number of needy families and provide them with actual help to raise their standard of living, claiming that it had provided such help to the

### Aqaba port business falls 8.7%

By Suleiman Al-Khalidi  
Reuters

AMMAN — Business at the Red Sea port of Aqaba, declining since the 1990 Gulf crisis, fell 8.7 per cent in 1994 mainly because of a U.N. trade embargo on Iraq, a main transit trade partner.

Figures released by the Port Corporation of Aqaba and obtained by Reuters on Monday showed last year's imports and exports totalled around 10.465 million tonnes from 11.634 million tonnes in 1993.

Tonnage through Aqaba has nearly halved from a peak of 20 million tonnes in 1988 before Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, when at least a third of Aqaba's cargo was Baghdad-bound.

"Aqaba continues to suffer from the lack of Iraqi cargo and because of Iraq's financial situation due to the embargo they are unable to import what they actually need," Tawfiq Kassar, chairman of the Jordanian Shipping Agents Association, told Reuters.

Mr. Kassar said prospects in 1995 for the port — now working at half capacity — hinged on easing of sanctions.

Total imports fell 25.5 per cent to 3.909 million tonnes in 1994 from 5.253 million tonnes in 1993.

Jordan, following an IMF-

## Jordan, Qatar explore future cooperation

AMMAN (Petra) — Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti Monday began his first day in office meeting with visiting Qatari Foreign Ministry Under-Secretary Ahmad Ben Abdullah Al Mahmoud.

The Qatari official, who started a several-day visit to Jordan Sunday, said that he hoped to strengthen bilateral ties through a series of agreements and protocols regulating cooperation between Jordan and Qatar in all fields.

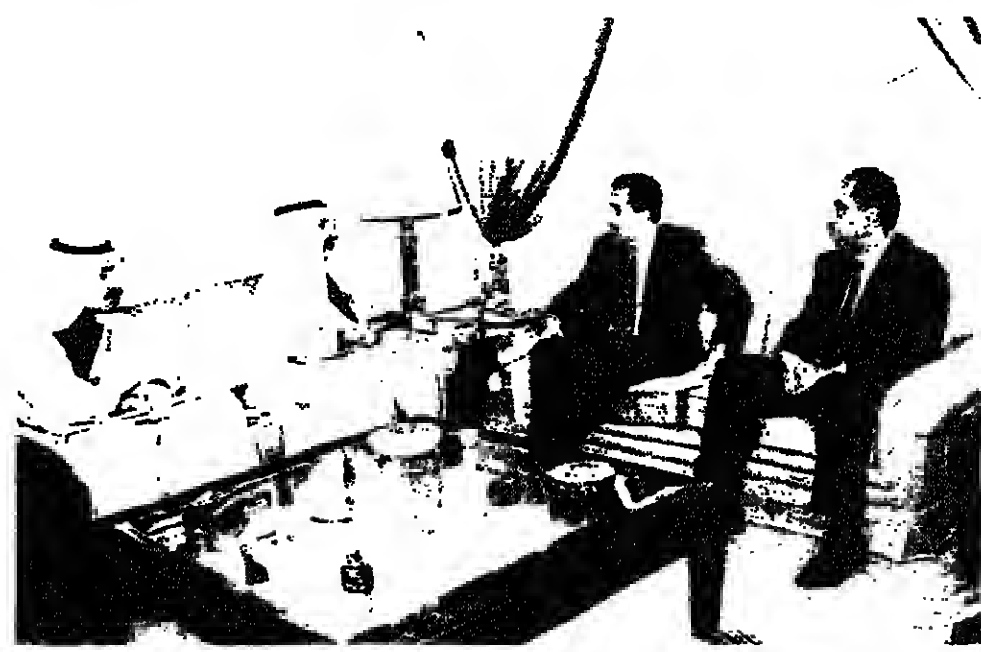
Mr. Kabariti, praising the existing strong ties between the two Arab states, told Mr. Mahmoud that Qatar's policies are viewed with deep respect and appreciation by the Jordanian leadership.

Mr. Mahmoud earlier held meetings with Foreign Ministry Secretary General Nayef Hadid during which the two men reviewed progress in the implementation of previous agreements and discussed a possible date for the joint Jordanian-Qatari higher ministerial committee meeting to conclude agreements in economic, health, cultural, land and air transport and informational fields.

Mr. Mahmoud, who is accompanied by a delegation from his ministry, said there are numerous areas for joint cooperation especially in investments, trade, communications, natural gas technology, transport, culture and education.

The Qatari official said his mission here was to prepare the ground for the higher joint committee meeting to be held in Doha.

According to Mr. Hadid, agreements which will be signed by the higher committee are designed to upgrade existing agreements, adding that the two sides are considering the establishment of a joint university and a joint bank.



Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdul Karim Kabariti Monday meets with visiting Qatari Foreign Ministry Under-Secretary Ahmad Ben Abdullah Al Mahmoud. The meeting was attended by Foreign Affairs Secretary General Nayef Hadid and Qatari Ambassador to Jordan Naser Abdul Aziz Al Naser (Petra photo)

## Department records 1994 surge in investments

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan witnessed a surge of investment activity in the last four months of 1994 and could expect the trend to continue during 1995, says the head of the Investment Promotion Department of the Ministry of Industry and Trade.

Assam Hindawi, director-general of the department, cited annual figures for investment in 1994 to substantiate his expectations and said the department was planning to conduct a large number of studies of the various sectors of the economy in 1995 with a view to highlighting investment opportunities.

The department handles all potential investors in the Kingdom by providing information and facilitates the procedures related to registering and licensing new commercial entities as a "one-stop window" of the government for investors in the emerging era of peace that is expected to witness heightened economic activity.

"We saw a strong surge in investment activity in the last four months of last year and the trend is continuing," Mr. Hindawi told the Jordan Times. "We are confident that Jordan would see greater investment activity in 1995 and 1996 of a much higher level than we saw in 1994."

At a press conference he addressed on Sunday, Mr. Hindawi released figures related to new investments in the Kingdom during 1994.

He said the capital investments of JD 257 million registered during the year reflected a 100 per cent increase over the previous year.

The total number of new projects launched during 1994 was 123, compared to 78 in 1993. Ninety-two of the new projects were given the status of "approved economic projects" which enjoy exemption from customs duties and taxation. Fifty-eight of the 78 new projects launched in 1993 were given the same distinction.

The Law on Encouragement of Investments of 1987 defines "approved economic projects" as those in the sectors of industry and mining, agriculture, livestock and fisheries, tourism, hotels, transport and hospitals.

The total capital invested in new projects in 1994 was JD 257 million, of which JD 225 million went to the "approved economic projects" category, compared with JD 160 million and JD 157 million respectively in 1993.

Loans from different sources accounted for JD 101 million of the new capital invested during the year, and the net worth of exemptions extended to the "approved economic projects" was JD 140 million.

The new projects created 9,264 job opportunities compared with 5,612 in 1993, said Mr. Hindawi.

The output of the "approved economic projects" in industry during 1994 was worth JD 317 million. More than half of the output — JD 172 million — were exported.

Under a categorisation adopted by the government, Mr. Hindawi said, 175 projects were launched in the "A" zone — Amman and its environs — 11 in "B" zone and 9 in zone "C."

The Investment Promotion Department completed processing all applications for licensing and registration it received during 1994, and no application was held over to the New Year, Mr. Hindawi said.

Mr. Hindawi announced that the department was finalising contracts with three local consulting companies to conduct a series of studies in three main sectors — agriculture, tourism and industry.

He said the department had identified 14 distinct projects each in 15 areas of the industrial sector, and 15 projects each in tourism and agriculture.

The consultants will conduct close studies of the projects with details of estimated capital, manpower, nature of production, output, expected profits etc. In the first half of 1995, Mr. Hindawi said.

The distribution of the projects is fair and even throughout the different governorates of the Kingdom, he said.

## Ministry completes hospital in Deir Abi Saeed

DEIR ABI SAEED (J.T.) — The Health Ministry announced the completion of a 69-bed hospital at Deir Abi Saeed in Irbid Governorate and said that the premises will become operational in the first quarter of 1995.

Jamal Sharman, head of the health department at the Deir Abi Saeed, said the JD5 million hospital has 69 beds, 15 of which will be used for emergencies and intensive care. Dr. Sharman added that catering and maintenance contracts have been awarded to a local company.

The Kura district has 12 health centres in addition to nine mother and child health care centres which will complement the work of the new hospital, Dr. Sharman said.

He said he hoped that the health ministry's budget this year would allow further expansion in health services including the construction of three new health centres at Judeita, Tibneh and Ashrafieh villages.

With the completion of the Deir Abi Saeed Hospital, Jordan now has 17 government-owned hospitals in addition to numerous health centres around the country.

According to health ministry statistics Sunday, the other hospitals are Al Bashir in Amman, Princess Badia and Princess Basma hospitals in Irbid, Nadim in Madaba, Karak, Ramtha, Salt, Ajloun, Abu Oheida and Maath in the Jordan Valley, Mafrag, Maan, Fuheis, Jerash and Al Huson hospitals.

According to Dr. Sharman, apart from providing health services, his department is responsible for laboratory testing of water sources in the district.

## Women's group opens legal advice hotline

By Samir Barhoum  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Because the Business and Professional Women's Club (BPWC) started to receive an annual average of 700 women clients seeking legal advice on various issues, the club found it imperative to launch a hotline service to receive calls by such individuals.

As soon as the hotline service was introduced at the beginning of the year, the club began receiving more than eight calls per day, according to BPWC Director General Buthaina Jandaneh.

Ms. Jandaneh said the club established a legal consultative service office for women in 1984. The office, she said, seeks to help women obtain their legal rights and basic needs, whether economic, social or political.

The idea of establishing the office resulted from the BPWC's conviction that promoting the civil, political and legal rights of women and providing women with access to judicial and political systems of the country are paramount.

Ms. Jandaneh said, adding that the office was opened after a study found that women needed to be familiarised with their rights and duties, especially after becoming actively involved in the labour market and development process.

"Despite the progress witnessed in our legislation in general terms, there still exists a gap between these laws and their implementation with regards to women," she said.

BPWC President Hind Abdul Jabbar said that when increasing numbers of women began seeking advice from the club on legal matters and problems facing them, the BPWC decided to launch the hotline service, the first such service in an Arab country, she added.

Ms. Abdul Jabbar said that most of those calling at the office were seeking legal advice rather than court action.

She said most of the cases were resolved amicably, and about 300 cases required a court settlement.

The BPWC is able to help in only 170-180 of the court cases because of its limited financial resources, she added.

Because of the success of the experience and to make it easier for women living in remote areas to have access to the BPWC's legal services, the hotline service was put into force.

Ms. Jandaneh said, pointing out that many women would find it difficult to leave their families or jobs, and it would be more convenient for them to receive advice over the phone.

She said the hotline service was limited to legal counselling because it is difficult to offer advice on social, psychological and other kinds of problems over the phone. In some cases, it is difficult to offer legal advice over the phone, so the callers are requested to visit the BPWC premises, she said.

The BPWC is the largest one of the four clubs that form the Jordanian Federation of Business and Professional Women Clubs. Established in 1976 as a national voluntary organisation affiliated with the International Organisation of Business and Professional Women, the BPWC aims to stimulate in women a realisation and acceptance of their responsibilities to society, to encourage women to acquire education and occupational training and to use their occupational capacities for the advancement of their society and themselves.

The legal consultative service provides counselling and representation to women in matters such as divorce, child custody cases, inheritance, employment, tenants' rights and other matters.

Ms. Jandaneh said most questions by clients centre on the Landlords and Tenants Law as well as powers of attorney abused by husbands or relatives.

She said two lawyers work at the office along with a legal panel which she described as a group of the best lawyers in the country. The panel draws up the BPWC's legal plans and activities, which include seminars and public awareness campaigns among other things.

Participants in the seminars have included prominent jurists, policy makers, as well as religious and civic leaders. Many lectures have been given to women's groups in local communities in Amman and other locations aiming at creating awareness of their legal, economic and social conditions.

### WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

#### POETRY RECITAL

\* Poetry recital by Palestinian poet Samih Al Qasbi at Philadelphia Hotel at 7:00 p.m.

#### CONCERT

\* Camerata Köln presented in concert (recorder, flute, oboe, violins, viola, cello, contrabass, and harpsichord) at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m. (programme includes pieces by Bach, Telemann, and others).

### NEWS

\* ABC News Highlights and McNeil-Lehrer News Hour at the American Center at 5:00 p.m.

#### EXHIBITIONS

\* Exhibition of works by Saad Khalil at the Royal Cultural Centre.  
\* Exhibition of works by Mahmud Obaidi at Darat Al Funun. Also showing the exhibition of contemporary Arab artists.  
\* Exhibition of paintings by Ismail and Tamam Shammout at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation.



## Sri Lanka truce holds in northeast

COLOMBO (AFP) — Sri Lankan security forces and separatist Tamil rebels continued to observe a truce for a second straight day Monday, as defence authorities took further measures to prevent violations, officials said.

Barring one "very minor incident," no violations were reported by mid-day Monday since the truce between troops and the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) came into effect Sunday in the war-torn northeast of the island, officials said.

"Everyone is holding their fire. Up to now we have not received any reports of violence of any sort," said military spokesman Brigadier Nabal Jayakody.

Troops at Iyakkachchi camp in the north had reported "sighting" a group of Tamil guerrillas Sunday within the demilitarised zone, but the issue was quickly resolved, Brig. Jayakody said.

"It was a bit of a misunderstanding. We are not even

treating it as an incident. The message has still to trickle down to their ranks. We have sorted it out," Brig. Jayakody said.

Under the truce agreement signed between President Chandrika Kumaratunga and LTTE supremo Velupillai Prabhakaran, both sides agreed to a 600-metre demilitarised zone in the northeast.

Six peace enclaves headed by representatives from Norway, Netherlands and Canada have been set up to monitor the truce. The foreign observers are due here in the next couple of days.

To ensure there were no violations, both sides were in contact through direct radio links set up Sunday, military officials said.

Police chief Frank De Silva has ordered police in the northeast not to carry out any action that could be construed as a truce violation

and to refer crucial decisions to regional military commanders.

"This means that police manning checkpoints can no longer arrest a person on suspicion without referring the matter to the top army officer in that area," a defence official said.

Police had set up dozens of checkpoints, to prevent movement of LTTE guerrillas between their bases and towns and villages in the northeast where they want to set up a separate Tamil homeland.

The truce accord allows unarmed LTTE cadres to move into populated areas. This has prompted concern among rival Tamil groups who fear the LTTE will try to strengthen their presence in the east.

The LTTE controls large parts of the north but have been confined mainly to jungles in the east since a major army offensive against

them in 1991.

The government has also permitted fishing in specified areas off the northern coast under the truce government sealed Thursday after two rounds of peace talks in the LTTE stronghold of northern Jaffna.

However, fishing will be restricted within a two nautical mile zone along the coast, the official said.

Fishing had been banned off the entire northern coast since June 1990 when fighting renewed between government troops and LTTE guerrillas to prevent rebels from using sea routes to mount attacks on coastal military facilities.

Shortly after the truce took effect, the LTTE also announced that it was operating a day-time ferry across the Jaffna lagoon to allow civilians to travel between the rebel-controlled northern Jaffna peninsula and the mainland.

## N. Korea to lift curbs on imports from U.S.

TOKYO (R) — North Korea said Monday it would lift restrictions on U.S. "commodity" imports and on the entry of U.S. merchant shipping into its ports later this month as part of an accord with Washington.

"To implement the framework agreement, the Administration Council (cabinet) of the DPRK (North Korea) has decided to lift from mid-January the restrictions on the import of U.S. commodities, and the ban on the entry of U.S. trading ships into DPRK ports in trade dealings between the DPRK and other countries," a spokesman for North Korea's Foreign Ministry told the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA).

Under an agreement between Pyongyang and Washington reached last October, the countries were to lower barriers between them in trade and investment, including curbs on telecommunications and financial transactions, "within three months of the date of the agreement," the spokesman told KCNA, monitored in Tokyo.

"The restrictions on the import of U.S. commodities and the ban on the port call of U.S. trading ships are all of the restrictions we have applied in our economic and trade relations with the United States," he said.

"This means we have completely fulfilled our obligation under the provision on the reduction of the barriers to trade and investment stipulated in the DPRK-U.S. framework agreement."

The KCNA report did not specify what the "U.S. commodities" were.

The move was "part of the work for the full normalisation of political and economic relations" between North Korea and the United States," the North Korean spokesman said.

Under the accord reached in Geneva, the United States and North Korea would discuss setting up liaison offices in each other's capitals in a step towards normalising bilateral ties.

The October accord defused a major international crisis that had brought threats of economic sanctions against North Korea and even fears of renewed conflict.

The United States and its allies suspected that North Korea had siphoned off nuclear fuel from its one working reactor to try to develop and atomic bomb. Pyongyang bluntly denies the charges.

Relations between the United States and North Korea had improved dramatically following the accord under which Pyongyang agreed to freeze its nuclear programmes in return for new nuclear power facilities that would almost eliminate the possibility of it producing weapons-grade plutonium.

The United States welcomed North Korea's decision Monday and said it would be examining its own steps to improve ties with Pyongyang.

North Korea's announcement came on the eve of a new round of talks by the United States, South Korea and Japan on funding \$4 billion in new nuclear technology as part of the North Korea nuclear deal.

## Southern Africa warned of drought as rains fail

HARARE (R) — Southern Africa, still emerging from the worst drought this century, faces another critical water shortage if heavy and sustained rains do not fall in the next two months, a regional weather body said.

"Prolonged soaking rain-fall is needed over the following two months if a region-wide drought is to be averted," said the early warning unit of the 11-nation Southern African Development Community (SADC), stretching from Tanzania to South Africa.

Riebard Masundire, spokesman for the unit, added: "Our message to SADC countries is that they should start now to make preparations in case the drought indeed grips the region, although there is still some hope the rains could come between now and February."

Southern Africa's summer rains, due between October and February, have failed in several countries. Weather experts blame this on the El Niño phenomenon, in which a huge mass of warmer-than-usual water in the Pacific

Ocean draws away the rains from southern Africa.

Some rain did fall in several countries just before Christmas, but not enough, and the results are beginning to take their toll.

Zimbabwe has already banned exports of the staple maize until next year and said it could be forced to sell or kill 5,000 of its 80,000 elephants this year because of a shortage of water.

The SADC unit said crop harvests in parts of all member nations Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe were now critically dependent on sustained and heavy rains.

"But according to the latest forecast, the outlook for the early part of January remains bleak, with generally light and patchy precipitation punctuated by longer dry periods than expected," the unit said in a report.

It noted that some SADC states such as Angola and northern parts of Mozambique, Namibia and Botswana and Tanzania continued to receive "generally satisfactory rainfall."

## Tears as veterans watch Filipino war ceremonies

LINGAYEN BEACH, Philippines (R) — Watched by tear-eyed war veterans, Philippine Marines Monday stormed the beaches of Lingayen Gulf in a re-enactment of the World War II invasion that helped destroy Japan's military empire in South East Asia.

Explosions lit up the beaches and World War II fighters and dive-bombers simulated aerial dogfights to mark the 50th anniversary of the U.S.-led landings that led to liberation of the Philippines from three years of Japanese occupation.

President Fidel Ramos, who viewed the ceremony from a grandstand, expressed hope that the world had seen the last of its global wars.

"Today, quite propitiously, after the cold war, it has become plain that we are entering an era of enduring global peace which has emerged as an attainable reality," he said.

"As we near the end of this century, there is solid hope that we have seen the last of the global wars."

It was Jan. 9, 1945 when an allied armada of more than 800 ships carrying 68,000 men hit the beaches of Lingayen in Pangasinan province, 180 kilometres north of Manila, to start an offensive against Japanese forces occupying the main island of Luzon.

The invasion set the stage for the recapture of Manila and eventually of other Japanese-held territory in South East Asia.

Japanese Ambassador Yoshifumi Matsuda said in a speech that the people of his country had learned a lesson.

"The tragedy of that war has taught us Japanese that peace is vital and precious indeed," he said.

"Reflecting upon the past with a deep sense of remorse and regret, we Japanese have endeavoured to promote friendship and trust with the peoples of Asia."

The allies took the beaches of Lingayen virtually unopposed, in contrast to the heavy fighting that marked the landings the previous October on Leyte Island in the central Philippines.

The Japanese commander in the Philippines, General Tomoyuki Yamashita, had ordered his men to retreat

inland from the gulf, hoping to start a protracted action intended to save Japan itself from invasion.

Gen. Yamashita surrendered to U.S. forces eight months later after atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. He was later hanged as a war criminal.

Many of the 100,000 residents of Lingayen feel the allied bombardment of their town before the landing was unnecessary, saying it destroyed many homes and killed an undetermined number of civilians.

Venancio Nava, a long-time Lingayen resident and regional director of the Department of Education, said American bombing began a month before the landing terrified the population.

"The bombings were unnecessary because the Japanese were gone," he said.

The Lingayen invasion also marked the last major strike by kamikaze pilots in the Philippine campaign.

As the allied armada approached Lingayen, the Japanese military ordered dozens of young pilots to launch daylong attacks against the invaders.

Many of the suicide planes, named after a typhoon that saved Japan from Mongol invasion in the 13th century, were destroyed before they could do any damage.

But some got through the fleet's defences, damaging 11 vessels, sinking one minesweeper and killing hundreds of allied sailors.

Former Filipino guerrilla Abundio Gonzalo, 73, cried as he was watched the re-enactment.

"I just couldn't hold back my tears. I remember all the hardships we went through," said Mr. Gonzalo, who was among 3,000 Filipino and 35 American veterans who attended the ceremony.

But U.S. Congressional Medal of Honour recipient Donald Rudolph, who knocked out a Japanese position and killed its 16 occupants almost singlehandedly a few days after landing in Lingayen, shed no tears.

"Why should there be tears?" said Mr. Rudolph of Bovey, Minnesota. "It's all over."

## Hundreds evacuate as California rivers break banks

SAN FRANCISCO (R) — Hundreds of people evacuated their homes in two northern California counties Sunday as torrential rains caused severe flooding.

Local news reports said the flooding in Sonoma and Napa counties, which lie just to the north of San Francisco, was the worst in the area in almost 10 years.

Two storms in two days dropped up to five inches (12 cm) of rain in parts of Northern California, causing the Napa and Russian Rivers to break their banks, flooding some houses and threatening many more.

The waters flooded some vineyards in the wine-producing region and forced the closure of many roads, while some residents built walls of sandbags to keep out the floodwaters.

One of the worst-hit towns was Guerneville in Sonoma County, where the Russian River had already risen to 37 feet (11 metres) — five feet (1.5 metres) above flood level — by Sunday evening and was expected to peak at 48 feet (14 metres) at midnight.

The rain continued to pour Sunday evening, swelling the rivers even more. More rain was forecast for Monday.

A local state of emergency was declared in Napa County where the rising Napa River threatened to flood houses in the towns of Calistoga, Yountville and St. Helena, a county information officer said.

About 500 people voluntarily evacuated their homes in the three towns, he said. Most of the evacuees stayed with friends or relatives.

## Murayama's U.S. visit overshadowed by history

TOKYO (AFP) — Japanese Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama leaves on his first visit to Washington Tuesday as the two countries grapple with the anniversary of the end of World War II.

One of the thorniest issues related to the Pacific War appears to be a planned international ceremony to be hosted by the United States in Hawaii on Sept. 2, the date of Japan's official surrender in 1945.

Japan reportedly wants to avoid being invited to the ceremony because of "national sentiments" and Mr. Murayama, who has already met President Bill Clinton twice since coming to power in June, is expected to raise the issue in Washington.

In sharp contrast to the visit by then Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa in February last year, Mr. Murayama's meeting with Mr. Clinton in Washington Wednesday is unlikely to be dominated by bilateral trade friction.

Japan and the United States have already announced plans to revive long-stalled talks on automotive trade later this month, almost a year after the negotiations first collapsed at the time of the Hosokawa visit.

The two sides expect to reach an agreement on Japanese government purchases of foreign computers some time this week and are also said to be close to an accord on improving foreign access to Japan's financial services market.

With the diminished focus on trade and amid looming



Jain ascetic Sahajmuni Maharaj, aged 62 who has been fasting for world peace in a north Bombay suburb for the past 201 days is carried aloft to a public reception in his honour which was attended by several hundred thousand devotees. Sahajmuni was to

finish his fast Sunday but an aide said he would do so only after sunrise Monday as Jainism, a 2,400 year-old offshoot of Hinduism, does not permit eating between sunset and sunrise (AFP photo)

## Monk breaks 201-day fast for world peace

BOMBAY (AFP) — An Indian ascetic broke his 201-day fast for world peace at a ceremony Monday at his small Indian religious community attended by fellow monks and nuns.

Sahajmuni Maharaj, 62, ate his first solid food in nearly seven months just after sunrise Monday at the House of Non-Violence here, his assistants said.

Bombay's normally bustling wholesale textile markets were closed to honour the breaking of the fast by the Jain ascetic, whose feat has captured the imagination of this Indian commercial capital.

Sahajmuni has been living only on two glasses of warm water a day since embarking on his marathon fast.

His followers said Sahajmuni had set record by going without solid food for 201 days, beating the 182 days set by Mahavir, a founder of Jainism, a 2,400-year-old offshoot of Hinduism.

Tens of thousands of people have congregated daily outside the House of Non-Violence in the wealthy Bombay suburb of Khar to receive his blessing or catch a glimpse of the monk.

Jains, who number more than three million and count among them some of India's most successful businessmen, are strict vegetarians, eating nothing grown beneath the soil, and are not allowed to kill any living thing.

Like other Jain ascetics, Sahajmuni wears only an un-

stitched white cotton robe. A mask covers his nose and mouth so that he does not inhale insects or microscopic creatures.

Jain ascetics never travel by mechanised transport, fearing the machines could crush insects. They travel on foot, sweeping the path before them with a broom or employing someone to do so.

Sahajmuni, who reportedly left home at the age of 12 and joined a nomadic group of Jain ascetics, is a veteran faster. A pamphlet handed out by his aides says he first went without food, for three weeks, in 1964.

He fasted every year after that, gradually increasing the number of consecutive days to 131 in 1993.

## Britain's monarchy doomed, poll says

LONDON (R) — Most of Queen Elizabeth's subjects believe Britain's royal family is doomed and will disappear in the coming century, according to a poll published Monday.

The Guardian-ICM poll will come as bad news for the royal family damaged by revelations about the marriage

breakdown of heir-to-the-throne Prince Charles and Princess Diana.

Although just 28 per cent of all those polled wanted to abolish the monarchy another 24 per cent said they were "not especially keen" on it and supported it only because it was "better than the alternatives." Only 36 per

cent described themselves as "strong supporters."

Asked whether Britain would still have a monarchy in half a century, 32 per cent said they believed the royal family would still exist while 49 per cent said no. This compared with 42 per cent and 34 per cent respectively two years ago.

## New escape as convicts captured in U.K.

LONDON (AFP) — The weekend escape of three convicts just after police recaptured three other prison fugitives has drawn new assaults on what are perceived as pervasive security flaws in Britain's prison system.

The latest escape, from the medium-security Littlehey Prison in central England, occurred late Sunday within hours of the recapture of the three earlier escapees.

That trio — two murderers and a bomber-arsonist all serving life — fled over the wall of the high-security Parkhurst Prison on the Isle of Wight off Britain's south coast last week using a homemade pass-key and ladder, officials said.

But their apparent plans to fly a stolen private plane to the mainland — one of them was a pilot — went awry

when the aircraft they had targeted turned out to be missing a battery, police said.

Instead, ill-equipped for harsh weather, they were forced to forage and live rough on the land as a massive police dragnet spread over the small island, tightening around them until they were recaptured Sunday without a struggle.

But hours later, as authorities who had been under fire for the escapes rejoiced, three inmates at the medium security Littlehey Prison in West Ferry, Cambridgeshire, turned up missing at evening roll call.

John Bartell, chairman of the Prison Officers' Association, said prison overcrowding had resulted in the Littlehey escapes — convicted robbers and burglars — being incarcerated in a facility not

commensurate with the severity of their crimes.

"Overcrowding throughout the system causes governors to reclassify or downgrade prisoners in order to create space, and put them into so-called Category C prisons totally unsuited for their containment," he told BBC radio.

The Littlehey escape, occurring only 10 miles from Prime Minister John Major's family home, was the latest in a spate of prison mishaps that has put heat on Home Secretary Michael Howard, who last week offered his resignation if his office's policies were found at blame.

On Jan. 1, accused serial killer Frederick West hanged himself in the Birmingham prison cell where he was awaiting trial on 12 murder counts.

## Mighty mouse halts airliner

STOCKHOLM (AFP) — An elusive and stubborn mouse made fools of Swedish airline SAS, forcing it to cancel a New York-bound flight after the tiny stowaway was discovered on board, Dagmar Nyheter said Sunday. The mouse was rumpled Saturday as it roamed freely around the forward half of the plane during a trans-Atlantic flight to Sweden. When relieved passengers landed in Stockholm, the plane was combed from cockpit to tail, but turned up no sign of the crafty creature. Security regulations bar furry little creatures, and SAS was forced to cancel the return leg to New York. U.S.-bound passengers had to fly via Oslo instead. The mouse flew on alone to Copenhagen.

## Swedish album, Lion King soundtrack top 1994 U.S. hits

NASHVILLE, Tennessee (AFP) — Swedish rock group Ace of Base's The Sign and the multi-artist soundtrack for Disney's The Lion King tied in first place on the 1994 best-selling album list, trade group said. Each album sold seven million copies, said the Recording Industry Association of America. The association reports monthly sales in one-million increments. Rounding out the top five album slots were "It's by Boyz II Men, August and Everything After by Counting Crows and Vs. by Pearl Jam — each sold five million — and Doggy Style by Snoop Doggy Dogg, four million. Last year's album heavyweights are dwarfed by the all-time mega-giant, Michael Jackson's 1983 Thriller, which has sold 24 million copies in the United States and millions more worldwide. In the singles category, Tag Team's Whomp! (There It Is) led the list and joined two other singles with a record four million copies sold, We Are The World by USA for Africa and I Will Always Love You by Whitney Houston.

## China's 'robber king' gets life for crime school

SHANGHAI (R) — A Chinese peasant who turned young boys into thieves and rapists in a school for crime has been sentenced to life in prison, the Wen Hui daily reported Monday. Hu Shicai styled himself the "robber king" of Henan province in central China after being let out of jail, where he served 15 years for robbery and sex offenses. The 68-year-old, rugged charged fees to school dropouts to teach them his crime skills. His graduates netted 80,000 yuan (\$9,500) and raped eight women and three girls, the newspaper said. Mr. Hu said he got the idea for his school from his neighbours, who ran classes teaching embroidery.

## Beijing inhabited 3,040 years ago

BEIJING (R) — The site of the current Chinese capital, Beijing, was inhabited as early as 3,040 years ago, the Xinhua News Agency said. It said the discovery followed archaeological studies of sites and finds dating back to the Shang and Zhou dynasties (14th to 4th centuries BC) in Beijing's suburban Fangshan district. Group of tombs, cultural sites and bronzeware with inscriptions were found in the district's Lulihe area, it said. Xinhua quoted archaeologists as saying Beijing was first established in 1,045 BC, when the place was known as Ji, according to inscriptions on bronzeware unearthed around the capital.

## Hello officer, I've stolen the baby

SAINT-ETIENNE, France (AFP) — A pair of soft-hearted car thieves have handed a car they had just stolen to the police after noticing a baby on the back seat, police in this central French town said Sunday. After stealing the unlocked car late Saturday, they roared off before noticing the baby and pulling up several hundred metres up the road, next to a telephone box, calling the local police and anonymously telling them where to find the vehicle. Car and infant were recovered safe and sound by a police patrol within minutes, and the parents, traced by computer records, were reunited with their charge barely an hour later.



## Rwanda's army says its troops killed 12

BUSANZE CAMP, Rwanda (R) — Rwanda's government army said Monday its troops attacked a camp in the south-west where 12 homeless people were slaughtered and more than 30 were wounded.

A spokesman for the Rwanda Patriotic Army (RPA) said two officers were arrested in connection with Saturday's attack on Busanze Camp near the border with Burundi in which he said 11 people were killed.

Aid workers who visited Busanze Sunday found a trench filled with 12 corpses, five of them children, with limbs broken by machete blows and executed with a bullet to the back of the head.

Thirty-six wounded were taken from the camp to the medical Emergency Relief International health centre at Runyonyi. U.N. officials confirmed that 12 people were killed in the attack.

Some aid workers Sunday said they suspected gunmen loyal to the ousted Hutu regime in Rwanda were behind the brutal raid.

But RPA spokesman Major Wilson Rutysire told Reuters a grenade was thrown at an unauthorised RPA foot patrol outside the camp. The patrol opened fire and killed 11 people.

"The second lieutenant leading the patrol has been arrested," Maj. Rutysire said. "And the acting area commander has also been arrested as the patrol was not



Australian U.N. soldiers give first aid to one of an attack by Rwandan troops in a southwest-ern Hutu refugee camp (AFP photo)

officially deployed.

"Other means rather than shooting should have been used to search the camp after the grenade was thrown," he added.

A woman survivor treated at Runyonyi with blood dripping from a double puncture wound to her elbow, told Reuters:

"They surrounded the camp, came in with machetes and hoses to beat us and cut down the shelter, then started shooting."

In the medical centres a young girl lay on a mattress, her knees shattered by one of the bullets that turned the camp in a former French safe zone into a graveyard. She said her parents were killed.

The homeless fled Busanze after the attack. Crude but were cut down and burned by Monday and their occupants had taken refuge in neigh-

bouring camps or the region's rolling hills.

Six months ago 6,000 Hutus sought sanctuary in Busanze, one of many camps in the southwest, as the Tutsi-dominated Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) advanced across the country at the height of civil war.

The homeless were protected first by French troops and then by U.N. observers against the threat of revenge killings after the massacre of up to one million Tutsis and Hutu moderates by militia-men loyal to the ousted Rwandan regime and RPA counter-attacks were a recipe for disaster.

Busanze was hit the same day as leaders of Rwanda, Burundi, Zaire, Uganda, Kenya, Zambia and Tanzania met in the Kenyan capital Nairobi in a bid to end the crisis caused by two million Rwandan refugees.

They adopted a strategy to combat insecurity after Rwanda's genocide and encourage refugees home but diplomats said finding the needed political will and money was a problem.

"RPA soldiers are shooting at anything that moves on Lake Kivu," an aid worker said Monday, adding there was a lot of tension in the south especially at camps for displaced people.

He said attacks by militia-men loyal to the ousted Rwandan regime and RPA counter-attacks were a recipe for disaster.

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## Bosnia truce talks bog down

SARAJEVO (Agencies) — United Nations efforts to consolidate Bosnia's ceasefire ran into difficulties Monday as Serbs and the government side failed to agree on the status of a demilitarised zone near Sarajevo.

A meeting of rival military commanders scheduled for Wednesday at Sarajevo Airport to discuss implementation of the four-month "cessation of hostilities" appeared in question, while regional negotiations also came under strain.

U.N. spokesman Major Herve Gourmelon told reporters that a meeting Sunday between the commander of U.N. troops in Bosnia, Lieutenant-General Sir Michael Rose, and Bosnian Serb Army chief General Ratko Mladic "was not overly positive."

The Bosnian Serbs had refused to reopen supply roads into Sarajevo, as called for in the ceasefire signed on Dec. 31, unless troops of the Muslim-led Bosnian government army vacated the demilitarised zone on Mount Igman, southwest of Sarajevo.

Serbs were also blocking a U.N. request to evacuate wounded from the Muslim enclave in eastern Bosnia, Maj. Gourmelon said.

Adding new conditions, Gen. Mladic also demanded that government troops must quit ground they seized on the fringes of the zone.

The U.N. special envoy to former Yugoslavia, Yasushi Akashi, said the world body wanted full and immediate compliance with the cessation of hostilities agreement.

If Gen. Mladic was adding new conditions then the Un-

ited Nations would take the matter up with Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic.

"The agreements have been accepted in good faith by the parties, and so now full and prompt compliance is the only issue," Mr. Akashi told reporters in Zagreb.

Maj. Gourmelon described Gen. Mladic's new demand as a "serious matter" but made clear the United Nations wanted to get the Bosnian army to quit the demilitarised zone.

"We want to get the withdrawal first and then General Rose will see what to do," Maj. Gourmelon told Reuters.

United Nations troops planned another ground inspection of the Mount Igman demilitarised zone later Monday to check whether Bosnian government soldiers had quit the last lookout point they were known to be occupying.

The patrol would be undertaken if a Bosnian army liaison officer showed up to act as a guide through the steep wooded slopes, now thickly covered in snow.

A helicopter reconnaissance was also possible but that depended on the mountain fog lifting.

Despite disagreements on implementing the truce agreement, the United Nations said it was still generally holding in most of Bosnia, which was described as "quiet and calm" over the past 24 hours.

The only exception was the Bihac enclave in the northwest, where rebel Serb and Muslim elements have not signed the truce. The Bihac

area saw light shelling during the reporting period.

In the only reported incident in Sarajevo, a grenade exploded near a French U.N. armoured vehicle, badly shaking the crew but causing no serious injuries.

The four-month ceasefire, brokered with the help of former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, was intended to pave the way for peace talks on a settlement of the 33-month-old war in Bosnia.

Envoys from the five-nation "contact group", who met in Bonn last week and will reconvene in Paris Tuesday, are seeking to inject fresh impetus into a peace plan for Bosnia.

But comments by a senior U.S. official, who met Bosnian government leaders in Sarajevo Sunday and held further talks Monday, suggested the plan may not be the same as the one the contact group outlined last year.

Richard Holbrooke, assistant U.S. secretary of state for East European affairs, said the plan was now a basis for more talks rather than the "take-it-or-leave-it" deal it once was.

Bosnian Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic Monday bluntly and publicly disagreed with Mr. Holbrooke on the international peace plan for Bosnia, insisting it was more than simply a basis for talks.

Mr. Holbrooke, following a meeting here with Mr. Silajdzic and President Alija Izetbegovic, twice referred to the plan proposed by a five-nation contact group as "a starting point for negotiations" between the Bosnian government and rebel Serbs. "Let me phrase it exactly,"

Mr. Holbrooke told reporters. "The contact group goal is to gain acceptance of the contact group plan as the starting point for negotiations. That is our position. There's no need for us to say any further."

That provoked the following response from Mr. Silajdzic: "That's your position, Mr. Holbrooke. But for Bosnia-Herzegovina it was take-it-or-leave-it."

"It's a bit, if I may say, unfair. We were asked to accept it with no conditions. Now it seems that the position has shifted when it comes to the aggressor representatives."

"We accepted under terms of take-it-or-leave-it. We took it, they left it."

Mr. Izetbegovic earlier had repeated his government's insistence that before peace talks can resume, "the Serb side must accept the plan."

Unveiled last July by Britain, France, Germany, Russia and the United States, the proposal would allot the Bosnian Serbs 49 per cent of Bosnia, down from the 70 per cent they have seized in 33-month of war.

Serb authorities rejected the plan and the proposed land distribution, while the Muslim-led government, which would share 51 per cent of the territory with Bosnian Croats, accepted it.

The broad outlines of the deal had initially been presented as non-negotiable. But at a meeting in Brussels in December the contact group — to the great annoyance of the Bosnian government — decided that the land division "can be adjusted by mutual agreement between the parties."

## Bangladesh politicians hint at move to end crisis

DHAKA (R) — Bangladeshi opposition leaders said Monday they were planning a 72-hour general strike before Ramadan, the Muslim month of fasting at the beginning of February, but would not rule out chances of a compromise with the government over demands for early elections.

They said the marathon strike could start any day after Jan. 19, when opposition parties called for a country-wide transport blockade to force Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia to accept their demands.

"It could either be Jan.

21-23 or Jan. 25 onwards," said one leader, adding that the "time is very sensitive."

He and his colleagues acknowledged to reporters that there had been a fresh move to try to find a compromise between Mrs. Khaleda Zia and her main rival, Sheikh Hasina of the Awami League.

They declined to give details or identify the mediators. The government also declined to comment.

"We don't want this last move to be periled by over-publicity, misinterpretation of statements or just because

of too much guessing," said one leader of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

Opposition legislators, who have boycotted parliament since last February, formally quit on Dec. 28, adding to pressure on the BNP to accept demands for elections under a neutral caretaker government.

Mrs. Hasina repeated her demand Sunday, saying that she wanted Mrs. Khaleda Zia to step down immediately to allow President Abdur Rahman Biswas to dissolve the 330-member parliament

and call early elections.

Opposition leaders earlier rejected Mrs. Zia's offer to resign one month ahead of elections scheduled for 1996.

The latest move for a settlement stemmed from fears on both sides that one would try to blame the other if uncertainties over elections led to violence or provoked the armed forces to the over, political analysts said.

None of Bangladesh's past parliaments have served their full terms because of squabbling among politicians or their failure to ensure peace and stability, they said.

## Pope calls Bosnian war Europe's shipwreck

VATICAN CITY (R) — Pope John Paul told diplomats Monday in his yearly "state of the world" address that the failure to stop the war in Bosnia marked "the shipwreck of the whole of Europe."

The Pope told envoys from more than 150 countries that although some progress had been made towards peace in 1994 "there are still rising today from this world too many cries of despair and pain."

He said Russia's attempt to crush Chechnya's independence bid showed that negotiations were the only way to guarantee ethnic peace and called for national dialogue in Algeria.

In apparent references to Cuba and Iraq, the Pope said trade embargoes imposed on countries often inflicted disproportionate and humiliating hardships on common people. Embargoes should be used with great discernment and subjected to ethical criteria.

The 74-year-old Pontiff reserved the most heartfelt part of his speech to an appeal for peace in Bosnia. Security concerns forced him to cancel a visit last year to its capital, Sarajevo.

Very near to us, in the winter cold, the peoples of Bosnia-Herzegovina continue to suffer in their own flesh the consequences of a pitiless war," the Pope said in his French-language address in the Vatican's frescoed Regia Hall.

"Faced with this tragedy, which in a way seems like the shipwreck of the whole of Europe, neither ordinary citizens nor political leaders can remain indifferent or neutral," he said.

"There are aggressors and there are victims. International law and humanitarian law are being violated. All of this demands a firm and united reaction on the part of the community of nations."

The Pope, who has in the past suggested that international military intervention might become necessary to stop Serb aggression, said solutions to the war in Bosnia "cannot be improvised at the whim of conquests by either side" and law could never sanction "results obtained by force alone."

He said he hoped the latest ceasefire in Bosnia could lead to a resolution of ethnic "regionalism."

Although he called for dialogue to resolve ethnic divisions, the Pope made no criticism of the UN in his address.

## India's ruling Congress Party hints at action against Rao rival

NEW DELHI (AFP) — India's ruling Congress (I) Party hinted Monday that it was planning to strike back at Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao's main rival for the first time since he quit the cabinet 16 days ago.

A meeting of the Congress Central Election Committee (CEC), described as a "letter written by Arjun Singh" to Mr. Rao concerning candidates for the upcoming legislative elections in five Indian states as "mischievous."

The CEC, which met here late Sunday, "has taken strong exception to such deliberate acts to weaken the organisation at this crucial juncture by a member of the (leadership)," Congress General Secretary Janardhan poojary said.

Arjun Singh, 64, asked Mr. Rao in a letter Saturday not to ignore party members "who remained committed to the leadership of the late Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi" while picking candidates for the state elections.

The move by Arjun Singh, who released the letter to the press, was widely seen as another attempt to cut Rao's support base in the Congress by indicating that the prime minister would not do justice to party loyalists.

Mr. Poojary told reporters here that Arjun Singh's letter

was "politically motivated." "His intention is clear," he said. "To say all these things at a time when the elections are due... is nothing but mischievous."

It was the strongest attack on Arjun Singh by the ruling party since he resigned from the cabinet on Dec. 24 after accusing Mr. Rao of plunging the 109-year-old Congress into a state of inertia.

Arjun Singh has since slowly escalated a carefully worded anti-Rao campaign in a move seen as an attempt to project himself as an alternative leader of the Congress. He has gained support from several disgruntled party leaders.

Arjun Singh declined to comment on Mr. Poojary's statement. Asked if he feared he would be ousted from the party, he shot back: "That is not my concern."

Mr. Poojary's threat to hit back at Arjun Singh came a day after the party's unit in Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state, called for Mr. Rao's ouster as Congress president.

More than 250 senior members of the Congress demanded in the state capital Lucknow that Mr. Rao step down as party chief in favour of Sonia Gandhi, the Italian-born widow of assassinated former Premier Rajiv Gandhi.

Newspapers reported Monday that the rebels also opposed the appointment of Mr. Rao's candidate, Jitenendra Prasad, as chief of the Uttar Pradesh Congress after the resignation of Narain Dutt Tiwari, an Arjun Singh ally.

"You have to choose between the Congress Party and Mr. Rao," Akbaruddin, a senior leader of the Congress in Uttar Pradesh, was quoted as telling the Lucknow gathering, which was attended by some 250 people.

The rebels urged Mrs. Gandhi to enter politics and "save the Congress" by abandoning her self-imposed isolation and jealously guarded privacy.

The movement against Rao has been gathering momentum since the humiliating defeat of the 109-year-old Congress in state elections in November and December and a series of corruption scandals.

Three ministers were sacked last month in connection with a \$1.3-billion bank and securities fraud and a sugar scandal. Another quit in a huff.

Mr. Tiwari quit after Mr. Rao ignored his repeated demands to withdraw the party's support to a Socialist-led coalition government which rules the state.

## Dehaene defuses linguistic mine, saves government

BRUSSELS (AFP) — Prime Minister Jean-Luc Dehaene displayed his legendary negotiating skills early Monday by defusing a linguistic crisis over the language abilities of a village mayor and saving his coalition government.

The crisis came with the election last October of Jose Happort, a member of the Socialist Party, as mayor of Les Fourons, a village of 4,000 people that is 55 per cent French-speaking but located

in the Flemish-speaking province of Limbourg.

The problem was that Mr. Happort does not speak good Flemish, a handicap which legally prevents him from becoming mayor, although Mr. Happort did not accept this limitation.

In an all-night marathon meeting of the four partners of the governing coalition chaired by Mr. Dehaene, a Flemish Christian-Socialist known as "The Defuser,"

Mr. Happort agreed to allow another Socialist, Jose Smeets, who is perfectly bilingual, become mayor.

In exchange for this concession, the government agreed to make translators available to residents of Les Fourons when they deal with Flemish administrators, a facility also accorded to Flemish-speaking residents of Communies, who are located in a Wallon, or French-speaking, province.

Elio Di Rupo, the French-speaking deputy prime minister, said a mediator would be appointed to cool tensions between the people of Les Fourons and the administrative authorities of Limbourg province.

The agreement satisfied the French-speaking members of the governing coalition, who had threatened a vote of no-confidence on Tuesday over the Fourons issue.

## Chirac seeks to boost campaign with book

PARIS (R) — Paris Mayor Jacques Chirac sought to revive his flagging presidential campaign Monday with a new book depicting France in a profound crisis and calling for vigorous political, economic and social change.

Mr. Chirac, 62, trailing far behind conservative Prime Minister Edouard Balladur in polls ahead of the April-May election, said the French people had lost confidence in their leaders and in their future.

He painted a picture of a weakened nation whose politicians had abdicated responsibility and "let technocrats monopolise the control levers of the state."

The newspaper Le Monde published excerpts of the book, France For All, to go on sale Tuesday, and said Mr. Chirac planned to challenge Mr. Balladur to a television debate to highlight policy differences between the two fellow Gaullists.

Political sources said it was highly unlikely that the prime minister, expected to announce his candidacy next week, would do Mr. Chirac the favour of agreeing to such a debate.

The Paris mayor's diagnosis of a politically paralysed, economically enfeebled and socially divided country was in sharp contrast with Mr. Balladur's reassuring message that France is on the road to recovery and growth.

Mr. Balladur's supporters

capable of uniting France's centre-right majority.

Opinion polls in the last week have shown the prime minister would beat all comers, while Mr. Chirac would finish a poor third behind a Socialist contender who will be chosen on Feb. 5.

Even within the Gaullist RPR party which Chirac founded in 1976, a majority of cabinet ministers and many parliamentarians are ready to back Mr. Balladur as the winner.

But Mr. Chirac, whose two previous presidential bids in 1981 and 1988 failed, shows no sign of giving up.

In an apparent pitch for left-wing voters orphaned by the withdrawal of President Jacques Delors from the race, he said: "The search for social cohesion is in my eyes the absolute priority."

"It is not acceptable that five million of our fellow citizens deprived of a job, sometimes of a home and thus of social life, are reduced to handouts or begging, with no other prospect than physical and mental decay."

At another point, he warned that failure to listen to the distress of workers and the poor put France "at the mercy of a social explosion which could occur very soon."

or deficit cutting.

The book was a publishing success, selling 190,000 copies, but failed to boost Mr. Chirac's standing in public opinion.

His latest book does not even mention Mr. Balladur by name.

Mr. Chirac's attempts to depict the prime minister as a timid, indecisive conservative suffered a blow last month with the successful storming of a hijacked Air France plane, of which Mr. Balladur took personal control.

The Paris mayor's campaign was further complicated Sunday when right-wing anti-Maastricht maverick Philippe De Villiers, who polled a shock 12.4 per cent in last June's European Parliament elections, declared his candidacy.

The 45-year-old rightist said he opposed the European Union's proposed single currency and wanted the Maastricht Treaty revised to allow EU members to veto decisions.

"Yes, I am a candidate... to give back to the French people their sovereignty, to free the working French and strike a pact of honesty and public security with the French people," he told TFI Television.

Mr. De Villiers said he hoped to produce another surprise in the April 23 first round of the presidential election and go on to a second round.

He has attracted criticism from the left for his anti-Maastrichtism and tr-



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## Tabloids vs quality press

THERE IS no denial that the tabloid press does exaggerate in its coverage of news and also in its views. This has led to complaints from both the country's political leadership and community leaders as well as from inside the ranks of journalists themselves.

Envisaged solutions for the "dangerous phenomenon," as the problem with tabloids is often called, range from calls to close those newspapers to contentions that the free market would take care of it, basically by enabling people to be the ultimate arbiters in judging what is good or bad for them.

Before delving into answers, though, some questions have to be asked. What is it that makes tabloids survive and prosper, not only in Jordan but also in other countries? Is it because they entertain? Or is it because they provide speculative answers, when information is either scarce or unavailable? Or, alternatively, because they tend to be radical in their views catering in the process for the fringe groups in society, or those who do not feed on the established media? Or is it because they venture into areas that are not normally trodden upon by the mainstream press? Finally, the question has to be asked whether politicians do not themselves resort to the tabloids, especially when they are denied access to quality newspapers, to either publish their views or their news.

It is not far-fetched that the most two important factors contributing to the increasing popularity of the tabloids, which are read by about 10 per cent of all newspaper readers are, first, the paucity of news about what the government is or is not doing in Jordan, to safeguard the interests of citizens, which is an inherent weakness accompanying our understanding of the information field per se; and, second, the slowness in developing our mainstream press. Tabloid journalists, when criticised over their one-sided reporting or rumouring, often complain that they often fail in their attempts to verify stories from mainly official sources. And, as far as our experience shows, this is not totally untrue. We must all admit that there is a problem with the shallow, rigid reporting by the established dailies of stories which involve political events, corruption, crime, and other sensitive issues. This no doubt contributes to the popularity of the tabloids, which thrive on sensation and touching people's sensitivities. The press and publication law, with so many elastic and vague articles, also contributes to the problem, as we all know.

With this in mind, it becomes imperative for the new government of Sharif Zeid and for the media society as a whole to reexamine the legislation, the practices and even the news-making process in the country as a whole, as His Majesty the King indeed urged the prime minister in the letter of designation.

A good start would be to form a consultative body made of representatives of the press, the government and neutral observers who are otherwise called wise men. Such a body could review all the pertinent legislation as well as practices that impede progress of the profession and its product. One overriding factor must be realised at the outset, though. Openness and the free circulation of information of all aspects of societal activities is a prerequisite not only for constructive free speech but also for the healthy democracy that we all aspire to.

### ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

GREAT HOPES are pinned on the new government of Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker at a time when the country is facing hardships and confronting new challenges in the peace era, said Al Rai daily Monday. The past two governments of Sharif Zeid did not cause disappointments to any one and handled critical issues with integrity and honesty, and for this reason Jordanian citizens are counting on the new team serving with the prime minister to listen to public complaints, deal with grievances and take drastic measures to put matters right, said the daily. Wishing the government success in its new mission, the paper said that the many ills troubling the country and the requirement of peace with Israel are bound to put Sharif Zeid and his colleagues to the real test. The paper said that the King's letter of designation to the prime minister contains the elements of success, if followed in the true sense and in word and in spirit.

SALEH QALLAB, a writer in Al Dastour accused Russian President Boris Yeltsin of trying to improve his shaky position at home by trying to annihilate the Chechan nation and destroying their capital. The writer said that the steadfastness of the Chechens before the Russian onslaught serves as a good example for the other oppressed nations of the world and their heroic resistance is a source of pride to all freedom fighters. The destruction of Chechenya can by no means help the Russian leader to annex the devastated nation to his empire and history abounds with examples that the annexation of nations by force of arms can never last, continued the writer.

## The View from Fourth Circle

# The new government and the new millennium

By Rami G. Khouri

THE DESIGNATION of Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker as the prime minister of Jordan, charged with translating into fact His Majesty King Hussein's vision of the need for national reorganisation to cope with the challenges ahead, is an opportunity for Jordan and Jordanians to experience very much more than a routine change of government. Let us be very clear about the stakes and the consequences of our current national development: In the next several years, perhaps decade, our policy decisions will determine whether Jordan will stagnate as another small, dependent Third World country that could not rip itself away from the comforting, child-like attraction of ancient patriarchal, imperial and dependent orders, or whether it advances as a model of balanced, human-based development that endures and flourishes because it values the dignity and rights of the individual.

Sharif Zeid appears destined to play a recurrently pivotal role in managing the modern political evolution of Jordan. He performed admirably when he led the government immediately after the April 1989 demonstrations in the south, bringing about an orderly transition to the early stages of liberalisation and democratisation. In retrospect, that was not an easy task, given the anger, fear and resentment that permeated a society in which almost every family suffered a declining living standard due to the accumulated debt and autocratic traditions of previous governments.

The situation today is different again. Jordan's current challenge is not mainly about domestic political culture — for what you see is what you get, an enlightened constitutional monarchy in which some light, modern principles of participatory, accountable and republican governance coexist comfortably with heavier, older patterns of tribal-based decision-making. The challenge for Jordan is to interact intelligently with the rest of the world, and more specifically with that small portion of the world's population that is moving ahead to forge a new global society based on twin access to information and services.

The world as a whole as well as individual countries — whether the United States or Jordan — are cleaving into two distinct groups: a small group of people and states that are dynamic, creative, exciting and therefore secure, and a much larger group of people and cultures that are mired in

mediocrity, stagnation and, ultimately, desperate poverty and conflict. The basic challenge is whether we will join the ranks of the Singapore and Switzerland of this world, or the Somalias and Bosnias.

Individuals have a major role to play in determining the answers to such questions, and I suspect that the manner in which Sharif Zeid shepherds the executive branch of government in the coming few years may set the tone for the direction of Jordanian national development for many years and decades to come. His most pressing task is to redefine the nature and power of the government, and to strike a new balance among the power of the state and the dynamism of the people.

This requires fundamental changes in the self-perception and behaviour of the state — not, you would think, a task suited for an individual whose entire life has been devoted to public service in the institutions of the state; yet, Sharif Zeid may be ideally suited to the task, as he showed post-April 1989. His background as a soldier probably gives him a vital capacity that other recent prime ministers have lacked — an appreciation for the limits of what armies and military security systems can and cannot do. His Sherifian lineage — the Arab equivalent of princely nobility — clearly provides him with the vital foundation of credibility, confidence and trust required to prod the country into long-term historical change.

The process of redefining and reorganising government is not a technical issue about projects and personalities. It is a far deeper conceptual struggle between two visions of the future: One vision sees the state as the source of all power, money and truth, and the other sees the individual and the people as the source of our strength and the vectors of our durability and development. The future that Jordan deserves would allow its people to express their full dynamism and creativity and thereby to meet their important challenges of economy, environment and diplomacy, in an atmosphere in which the individual, rather than the state, comprises the primary vortex of national development.

Sharif Zeid's government faces the monumental task of asserting this fact in a manner that is faithful to our social traditions and cultural values, but that simultaneously allows Jordan to move into the future alongside the modern, productive societies of our world. Information

and education are the two key areas where freedom, quality and vitality must be enhanced quickly and substantively, if we are to avoid a future in which we struggle to feed ourselves by selling ourselves to foreign tourists and investors, effectively turning ourselves into a combination zoo and parking lot for the world's powers — who became powers in the first place because they encouraged their people to be inquisitive, creative and bold.

The states that will flourish and grow strong in the future will be those states that can tap the full power of their people's intelligence and creativity. Modern Arab political culture and history have traditionally thwarted rather than promoted intelligence and creativity, while instead favouring compliance, obedience and passive allegiance as the preferred traits of their people. This era has brought the Arab World only greater tension and conflict, and, in most cases, including Jordan, heavy dependence on foreign funds and food.

Sharif Zeid faces the exciting but delicate task of translating King Hussein's vision of national reorganisation into a practical set of policies that moves Jordan from the past into the future, from old ways to new ones. The future is already clear for those who have the will to discern it; it is a future that promises progress, well-being and fun for those who dare to be free, exploratory, innovative and contemplative, and that promises suffering, war and want for those who are determined to suppress the energy of individual creativity and to beat down those who would ask questions.

In 1989, Sharif Zeid successfully helped Jordan to move from the first to the second halves of the 20th century. Now, he is asked to move us from the second towards the third millennium. The conceptual and qualitative leap required of Jordan is enormous, but within our grasp and capabilities, if we value freedom and human dignity above other, less noble forces of servitude, violence and exploitation that have tempted us in recent years. Sharif Zeid — with his combination of princely and princely nobility and armed forces background — may appear to some as an unlikely candidate to lead the government through this historic stage of national transformation. I suspect he will rise to the challenge, though, because he has already done it once before during this millennium.

## Testing to destruction

By John Hooper

FOR THE past eight months Italy has been governed by a businessman. Silvio Berlusconi's only previous experience of politics was as leader of a movement he founded three months before he became prime minister. Now that he has offered his resignation, serious consideration is being given to replacing him with a lawyer, Antonio Di Pietro, who has no political experience whatsoever.

In different ways both men owe their public notoriety, and therefore their political acceptability, to television. Mr. Berlusconi's three television channels control almost half of what Italians watch in their homes; as an anti-graft prosecutor Di Pietro became a national celebrity when he grilled the once-mighty in televised court proceedings.

What has made Mr. Berlusconi replaceable is the detection of a key coalition partner, the Northern League. The League is enthusiastically pro-capitalist, but otherwise impossible to fit into the conventional, left-to-right spectrum. Irene Pivetti, speaker of the Chamber of Deputies, is a member of the League. She is so far to the right that she wears the symbol of an 18th century French counter-revolutionary group on a chain round her neck. But then Roberto Maroni, the interior minister, is also a member of the League. And the jazz-loving "Bobo," when often turns up at ceremonial functions wearing shades and stubble, is an admirer of his fellow sax-player, Bill Clinton.

With such a miscellaneous team behind him, the leader of the Northern League, Umberto Bossi, felt he could switch his party's allegiance from a rightist government to a leftist opposition. But when he did so, there was a rebellion in support of continued loyalty to the Mr. Berlusconi administration. And, inexplicably in any conventional terms, it was the "progressive" Mr. Maroni who put himself at the head of it. Clearly, much that is odd and new is happening in Italy. But what, exactly?

It has been suggested that the entire country has become a sort of political research laboratory for a world transformed by the fall of the Wall, and that the experiments being conducted in it offer the rest of us a fascinating, if disturbing, glimpse of the future: one in which politics will have little to do with ideology, and in which the crucial battle will be not so much for votes as for control of the means of communication.

That highly persuasive and seemingly cohesive view is nevertheless made up of several different propositions, none of which necessarily implies any other. It may be true that



the Italians have unwittingly turned their country into a kind of political test bench in the years since 1986. But it does not mean that they have done so because of the end of the cold war. Nor, even if that were the case, does it mean that the results of their experiments need apply to anyone but themselves. By the same token, no one has ever proved an inherent link between television and ideological vacuousness, even though it may be commonplace to infer one.

Against this complex background, some simple questions would seem to be in order. What, for a start, is genuinely new? It did not need recent events in Italy to show that television can have a powerful influence on politics. But whereas TV has been used elsewhere to promote politicians, in contemporary Italy it is being used to create them.

Italian society would also appear to be throwing up new sorts of political leaders, with no previous experience of politics, and new kinds of political parties, that transcend the traditional left to right classification.

But which of these authentically original phenomena can be attributed to a new global order and which to specifically Italian circumstances? Which could have implications for the rest of the world and which only for Italy?

So far, the only politician to have been created by television has been Mr. Berlusconi, and he is unique. His control over the output of television would have been prevented in other countries by the application of anti-trust laws which, in Italy, proved to be defective and avoidable.

Nevertheless, as satellite channels rival terrestrial ones, national anti-trust will become increasingly irrelevant. To the extent that they do, the risks of a future Mr. Berlusconi establishing ascendancy over a particular nation

increase. The appeal to Italians of amateur political leaders may well have something to do with a global retreat from ideology. Just as plausibly, though, it can be seen as the result of a different, and uniquely Italian, phenomenon: the discrediting by scandal of an entire class of professional political leaders.

Huge gaps have been left in what, in the Latin language, is called the "political space" — that notional territory which, in a democracy, is rightly inhabited by politicians. Something similar happened following decolonisation in Latin America in the 19th century and in much of the rest of the Third World in the 20th. In those areas, it was usually soldiers who leapt in to fill the gaps, claiming to offer a competence and honesty which indigenous politicians had been unable to supply.

Contemporary Italy seems to be providing the answer to the question of what happens when similar conditions arise in the sort of society in which a coup is unthinkable — the "political space" is invaded just the same, but by media moguls, and perhaps courtroom celebrities.

The emergence of parties in Italy which are difficult to classify on conventional criteria would seem at least to be one development that could safely be attributed to the disappearance of cold war tensions. Once again, though, there is a snag.

The outstanding example of such a group is the Northern League, and it was founded before and not after the fall of the Wall. It was created, moreover, in support of a specifically Italian protest — against the diversion of resources to a poor, corrupt and inefficient South.

The one party of significance to have emerged in

communism. The paradox is more apparent than real. What kept the Italian Communist Party from office was not just the resistance to it offered by the Christian Democrats and their allies, but also the PCI's association with a repressive and inefficient Soviet Union.

Both these handicaps vanished in the years following 1989. The Soviet Union disintegrated. The Christian Democrats disappeared in a flurry of sleaze. Mr. Berlusconi catered politics to prevent the PCI, newly remodelled as the Democratic Party of the Left, from exploiting the opportunity which those two developments presented.

But while he succeeded at the hustings, he has failed in office, and the danger now is that the collapse of his bizarre experiment could deliver the initiative to his ally, Gianfranco Fini of the neo-fascist MSI. That could create an old-style left-right confrontation of an intensity unparalleled elsewhere in Europe.

If there are lessons to be drawn from events in Italy, therefore, they would seem to be substantially different from those outlined earlier. One, with obvious implications for countries like France, Spain and Greece, is that if corruption is allowed to become systematic it can have devastatingly disorientating long-term consequences comparable with those provoked by military intervention.

Another, with much wider relevance, is that control of television can be used, not as an opiate, but for unambiguously precise ideological ends. A third conclusion only applies to Italy, but is perhaps the most remarkable of all: that in Italy, of all places, the traditional conflict between left and right is still at the

## Changing laws of gravity pull 'foreign affairs' east

By Thomas L. Friedman

TOKYO — A "foreign affairs" column now returns to The New York Times. "Foreign affairs" is actually the paper's oldest column. It was begun in 1937 by the remarkable Anne O'Hare McCormick and was originally called "In Europe." In those days "In Europe" was foreign affairs for most Americans, and it seemed perfectly natural that the paper's one overseas columnist was rooted on the European Continent.

Mrs. McCormick's 1954 obituary in The Times said that she got her start in foreign reporting "as the wife of Mr. McCormick, a Dayton engineer whom she accompanied on frequent buying trips to Europe." Obviously, I was born in a very different era, one in which columnists only have to accompany their curiosity and engineers travel to Tokyo for buying trips, not Paris.

Both factors have led me to start my column from Japan. While I have no intention of calling my column "In Asia," the thought did cross my mind. Let's face it, when the history of the late 20th century is written, the most important event may not be the reconstruction of Europe, the cold war or the collapse of communism, but rather the rapid modernisation in one generation of 2 billion people from Japan to the border of India. Never have so many raised their standard of living so far so fast.

I was in Singapore recently when its government decided that to keep attracting top-quality cabinet ministers, it would pay them about two-thirds of the average salary of the country's senior doctors, bankers and CEOs. That comes to \$765,000 a year for the prime minister and \$400,000 for the others.

No wonder an American diplomat in Hong Kong told me: "I go to parties here and without fail I am the poorest person at every event. The BMWs and Rolls-Royces roll in one after the other, and then I show up with my little Japanese car. During my first tour here a decade ago, I felt like Gulliver among the Lilliputians. We represented the future. Now I feel like I am brought along to parties as a potted plant for adornment."

Yet, Walter Mondale, the U.S. ambassador to Japan, complains that many American business, educational and organisational leaders "are still and

the American ambassador in Tokyo is being restored by a Japanese construction company because there were no American contractors here skilled enough to do the delicate job. A new study by the Mansfield Centre found that there is still four times as much news about America on Japanese television as news of Japan on American television.

But if we Americans are still smug about Asians, always waiting for their bubble to burst, it is nothing compared with their smugness towards America. They think they can defy the laws of gravity — that economic consequences won't have political consequences. You cannot have a conversation in Asia without being verbally canted over how flawed America has become and how superior is the "Asian Way." Their smugness, though, is as misplaced as ours.

How long can Asian governments keep their people so regimented and focused on export growth when their middle classes are growing so wealthy? Take Singapore. Thanks to its stern government, it is clean, rich and seriously boring. Singapore is a shopping mall with passport controls. Any wonder American televangelists and Oprah Winfrey are increasingly popular out there?

How long can Japan's government keep telling its youth that they have to accept lower wages and live in apartments as big as my garage, so that Japanese companies can put all their profits into expanding markets abroad? How long will Japanese consumers pay \$70 for a watermelon because Japan protects its highly inefficient food industry from foreign competition?

How long is China's leadership, the smuggest of all since it forced President Bill Clinton to eat crow on human rights, going to be able to keep the lid on a country that is economically becoming North Carolina and politically still North Korea? And how long will Asians tolerate the fact that the economic boom has left them with five of the seven most polluted cities in the world?

The answer to all of the above is: not much longer, and that's why I chose to start here. Asia is not only going to be the world's biggest business story in the coming years. The economic revolution here is well under way, but the political



## Cabinet assured of vote

(Continued from page 1)

Haddadin (Zarka), who, along with deputies Mustafa Sheikhat (Salt) and Khalil Haddadin (Amman), represented leftist lawmakers in a meeting with Sharif Zeid on Sunday.

He said the three deputies will vote against the government.

So will deputy Talal Oheidat (Baqi Keonah, near Irbid), who told the Jordan Times he would withhold confidence from the government because it will implement the peace treaty with Israel.

With informed parliamentary sources expecting Deputy Toujan Faisal will most likely withhold confidence, the number of deputies who will certainly vote against the government is 22. Observers say opposition might also come from a few deputies who are unhappy with the government because they wanted to join it and were not given the chance to do so. Accordingly, the government is not likely to get more than 54-to-56 votes of confidence, the sources said.

Apart from the IAF, the four parliamentary blocs in the House are represented in the cabinet and so are independent lawmakers.

Founder of the 18-member National Action Front Abdul Hadi Al Majali said Sharif Zeid responded to his group's request for occupying five of its members in the cabinet and he pledged the group will fully cooperate with the government.

The 10-member National Democratic Coalition has four representatives in the government and its spokesman, Hammad Abu Jamous, said the group will fully support the prime minister.

So will the one-member Jordanian National Front which has two members on Sharif Zeid's team, and the Parliament Ikha' (Brotherhood), which has five members, but also represent a time of great opportunities.

House Speaker Sa'd Hayel Srour said Sharif Zeid recognises the role of the House and the need for developing strong legislative-executive relations.

On the basis of the House's experience with Sharif Zeid when he formed his second government and his assertive to Mr. Srour last week, he wants to fully cooperate with the House, the House speaker expected the new government to work in harmony with the legislature.

## Perry flies over Golan

(Continued from page 1)

posed an "atomic threat," and urged Middle Eastern countries to press for the destruction of Israeli nuclear arsenals.

Later Monday, Mr. Perry said Washington would endeavour to control the supply of nuclear materials to Tehran after Moscow signed a deal to build a nuclear power station in Iran.

"We are working with Russia and former Soviet countries to help control nuclear and fissile material," Mr. Perry told a joint press conference with Mr. Rabin.

Both Israel and the United States were "very concerned" that Iran may develop nuclear capabilities, the defence secretary said.

"In my own judgement the time for Iran to get it depends on the assistance they can get."

"I believe that it will take Iran many, many years to achieve nuclear weapons: but they have the possibility to acquire uranium and plutonium in the short range," he said.

Moscow agreed Sunday to help Iran build the first phase of a nuclear power station in the town of Bushehr and to provide enriched uranium to operate it.

Mr. Rabin told the press conference: "In the long term our main concern is Iran's

military capability on conventional and non-conventional weapons in a term of seven to 15 years."

Mr. Perry looked to Israel to support the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, saying the United States hoped for a maximum number of signatories when the accord is renewed in April.

"We hope that Israel will help us concerning the NPT," he said.

Mr. Perry did not comment on Mr. Rabin's denial of reports that Israel has transferred U.S. military technology to China.

"We have a joint committee which has been established a few years ago," the secretary said. "I have complete confidence that Israel will conduct a serious investigation."

"We do everything to comply to U.S. laws with regard to the last use of U.S. material," Mr. Rabin said.

The Los Angeles Times has reported that Israel has helped China in the development of a new fighter jet with joint U.S.-Israeli technology from the Lavi project abandoned in 1987.

Mr. Perry reaffirmed Washington's commitment to maintain Israel's qualitative military edge over Arab neighbours.

## Arafat, Peres discuss self-rule

(Continued from page 1)

in and went to the Palestinians' hotel for the first time since the election talks began in Cairo last year.

Dr. Erekat said this round of talks would last for two days.

"We are opening our discussions on elections and hopefully it will be a fruitful one," Gen. Zohar told reporters.

Asked what importance this round of talks would have in light of the meeting on Monday between Mr. Arafat and Mr. Peres in Gaza, Gen. Zohar replied:

"The importance is that there is ongoing discussions on all the issues all the time everywhere. We are going to discuss everything. We are out going to tell you the details of what we are going to discuss but it's open for all the issues that have to do with the elections."

Palestinian sources described the talks as low key and said they could not achieve anything without the redeployment of Israeli troops.

Palestinians have said they will not vote under the barrel of Israeli guns.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said last month that the Palestinian elections

could take place without a withdrawal.

Several rounds of talks have come to nothing. The two sides disagree over the qualifications for candidates and voters. Israel wants to ban hardliners who advocate violence against the Jewish state. The PLO objects to any Israeli veto.

Israel also demands a joint Israeli-Palestinian committee to monitor the polls, a demand rejected by the Palestinians.

Dr. Erekat could not say whether the two sides were close to a deal, but said "we are trying to reach to an accord."

But he repeated Palestinian assertions that no elections could take place without an Israeli redeployment.

Palestinian Cooperation Minister Nabil Shaath voiced satisfaction with the establishment of a committee to handle the prisoner issue, consisting of Police Minister Moshe Shahal, Environment Minister Yossi Sarid and Justice Minister David Libai.

"I hope the decision (to free prisoners) will be taken quickly," Dr. Shaath told Monday's Al Quds newspaper.

## Pitched battles in Grozny

(Continued from page 1)

Kurbanov maintained Monday that Mr. Dudayev remained in the presidential palace.

Mr. Dudayev has not been seen in public for a week. His supporters remain in Grozny, life has been

A bridge about 100 metres behind the palace — the link to the only route out of the capital, not yet controlled by the Russian forces — was also inaccessible Monday because of shelling and continued fighting.

# Peace needs strong support to hold

The following is the full text of a speech given by His Royal Highness Prince Talal Bin Mohammad at the annual conference of the United Jewish Appeal in Palm Beach, Florida on Jan. 7.

IT IS a great pleasure to be with you here tonight. Let me begin by conveying to all of you His Majesty King Hussein's and His Royal Highness Prince Hassan's warmest greetings.

Let me also express the thought that as one of the sons of Jordan, I believe the historic moments that we are living today are not only of particular importance to both our peoples, but also represent a time of great opportunities. Opportunities for each and every one of us to work for the betterment of life of all human beings from our part of the world who have suffered for far too long.

For the next few minutes, I would like to discuss the Jordanian-Israeli peace from my country's perspective. As most of you know, we, in Jordan, have for decades advocated reaching a peaceful settlement in the Arab-Israeli conflict since the days of my late grandfather, King Abdullah. This position has often caused us great hardship, especially when other parties in the region were not yet ready to accept any such settlement.

At the Madrid Peace Conference of 1991, Jordan was the only country that attended with the conviction that a political solution would not be forced on the belligerent parties by the two co-sponsors, the United States and Russia.

In addition, it was Jordan that made it possible for one of the key parties to the conflict, the Palestinians, to attend the peace conference by providing

them with an umbrella.

As a result of Jordan's independent will, we would describe the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty as a natural evolution of our efforts. The drive towards the peace treaty began in 1988 when Jordan became engaged in a process of internal consolidation. That year, the Kingdom severed administrative and legal ties with the West Bank and Jordan was able to resume normal parliamentary life. Before that time, elections were impeded by the fact that half of the seats in Parliament were allotted to the West Bank.

Jordan proceeded to legalise political parties, maintaining a dialogue with the entire political spectrum of Jordanian society, thus compelling no-one to resort to extra-legal means in order to be heard. Jordan today has the freest and fairest parliamentary system in the Arab World.

This leads me to a brief summary of Jordan's objectives. Our goal is to provide a political model for the rest of the region: A model where institutions are not dependent on individual personalities; a model in which people will always come first.

Although Jordan's democratic process may be viewed as a threat by some of its neighbours, we consider it to be an irreversible process and we will not compromise the principles of freedom, the rule of law and popular participation in government for the sake of political expediency.

The building of institutions, however, would ultimately crumble without the crucial elements of economic and social stability brought by peace.



In real terms, the peace treaty with Israel reasserts Jordan's traditional role as a key player in the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

On a broader level, the treaty has also prevented the collapse of the entire peace process. Indeed, the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty has become the anchor of a regional peace, especially when faced with stagnation on the Syrian-Israeli track and the unacceptable high death toll in Israel and the occupied territories due to the rise of extremism.

Against this somewhat gloomy background, it is all the more imperative

that Jordan's peace treaty with Israel be supported by all of those who wish to see a comprehensive settlement to the conflict. We have all, young and old, waited far too long for this peace. Too many hopes have been crushed. As the Prophet Moses advised, we choose life.

The hard truth is that a difficult road lies ahead. Our most pressing need is to bridge the wide disparities existing between Jordanian and Israeli societies.

On the one hand, we share almost identical population levels, high standards of adult literacy and education, on the other hand, the Israeli economy is 12 times larger than that of Jordan's and the per capita income

seven times that of Jordan's. Today, one in five Jordanians lives below the poverty line.

These discrepancies should be addressed as quickly as possible in order to maintain the confidence of every Jordanian in the peace treaty.

In Jordan today, expectations are running high but we are faced with a limited window of opportunity in order to act. The enemies of peace wish to see us fail and time is running in their favour. For this reason, we must focus on realism rather than idealism. Long-term projects, such as a Red Sea-Dead Sea canal are very exciting, but we need substance today.

By experiencing the tangible economic benefits of peace, our people will move readily be able to overcome the psychological and cultural barriers that have accumulated over half a century. Jordanians and Israelis must act with sensitivity towards each other.

We should adopt a gradual approach in our attempts at altering the human environment in our region. Any move to force the pace of this change, as well meaning as it may be, might do more harm than good.

The Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty, and all progress on the other tracks achieved so far, could not have been possible without the active and persistent involvement of the United States. America must continue its supporting role in order to make peace a success.

As a result, it is essential that Jordan receives help from its friends in the United States in order to achieve its immediate, intermediate and long-term

economic and military needs. These needs are not small and their attainment will significantly alter the status-quo in favour of a stable and lasting regional peace.

On Oct. 26 of last year in a former minefield in Wadi Araba, Jordan and Israel signed a warm, real peace, a peace quite different from previous peace treaties. The historic step that was taken by the people of Jordan and the people of Israel was founded on mutual respect, the desire for normalisation and the best interest of future generations.

Today, no peacekeeping troops nor international monitors stand between Jordan and Israel. It is because they are needed. What Jordan and Israel do need is political and economic security, stability and prosperity. Jordanian and Israeli children have the right to grow and live in peace.

If someone had told me a year ago that there would be no Israeli embassy in Amman today and that Israeli tourists were enjoying Petra for the first time, I might have thought they were taking too much Halcion.

But, thankfully, when desire, ability and genuine intentions come together, miracles do happen. And a miracle certainly did happen in the hot desert of Wadi Araba last October the 26th.

To quote His Majesty King Hussein speaking at the treaty signing ceremony at Wadi Araba:

"I wish this treaty to be the gift by which I express my gratitude to all Jordanians, young and old, men and women and to all the members of this cherished family to which I am proud to belong and will always be proud of as long as I live."



# What kind of man do you take me for?

Two classic revivals are giving all the parts to men. Liberating, sexy or just confusing?

By Dominic Cavendish

DECLAN DONNELLAN, the artistic director of the famously fearless touring company Cheek By Jowl, is sitting on his sofa acting cagey about *As You Like It*. "It was very strange in rehearsal because they were practice skirts and when they stopped to go off and have a coffee or light a fat it was as though there had been women in the room." He pauses. "The things we discovered are not the sort of things I can easily talk about in an interview, because they are emotional and instinctual — they change as soon as you talk about them."

It's a funny business, this talking about men in skirts, but if you do an all-male production of a Shakespearean comedy then you have to expect a certain amount of insatiable curiosity from outsiders. In Shakespeare's day, no one would have batted an eyelid — all-male casts were the norm — nowadays any experiment that takes roles away from women and touches the prickly subject of gender is a potentially explosive one.

Yet, the first professional all-male *As You Like It* since Clifford Williams' Theatre Company's 1970 production, the more the audience noticed the gap. It was the moment I got into

trousers and forgot about trying to be female that the audience started to believe I was. Surprisingly, these added layers of sexual identity (a man playing a woman playing a man playing a woman) are less problematic for actors and audience than that of men just playing women.

Any actor who is asked to transform himself into a woman is either going to wonder why he has been chosen or worry that he'll end up as a grotesque caricature. Both Lester and Simon Coates, who plays Celia, Rosalind's girlfriend, were immediately troubled by their physical differences; Lester in particular was convinced he was too tall. Although they were trained in movement, they were told not to imitate but to look for an inner femininity.

In rehearsal, started repressing traits he considered too testosterone-based. "The second I became in any way aggressive on stage, I thought 'Oh my God, I'm being masculine.' But Declan said 'You've really got to go for the aggression.'"

Switching into the female is now second nature to both actors. "I see Declan as a woman all the time on stage," says Coates. "Off-stage, too, their behaviour has changed: 'In the dressing-room, there's more of a physical relationship between me and

Adrian than there might normally be if we were playing men. We're always saying 'Would you do my dress up?' or 'Do I look all right?' — it's odd."

The pair still encounter actresses who take them to task for being inaccurate. But as Richard Eyre has observed about cross-dressing in general, however good the performances, you never forget you are watching men. Donnellan believes the all-male cast forces the audience to tread a tightrope of willed belief, a quintessentially theatrical act of faith. "Exposing the nuts and bolts of theatre actually makes you more involved in the play. Instead of being a clever essay on gender confusion the device opened up the play's emotional heart."

Another forthcoming all-male production, Alimbo Theatre's version of Sheridan's 1775 comedy of manners, *The Rivals*, takes a very different tack. Subtitled "A Queer Appropriation", it acquired a cult fringe status last October by turning the women characters into men and thrusting the drawing-room shenanigans into Nineties Soho.

The experiences of the actors, though, were surprisingly similar to their counterparts in *Cheek By Jowl* in all-but-one respect: "Early rehearsal resembled a 'spot the queen' competition," according to Paul Ebsworth, who plays the

self-obsessed Faulkland. "Those of us who were straight managed to work ex-girlfriends into discussions very early on. The first question people asked me after the show was always 'Who's gay and who's straight?'" By contrast, within *Cheek By Jowl*, the sexuality of the actors was not an issue, though Coates and Lester are widely (and wrongly) assumed to be gay by audiences. "The men never look you in the eye if they come back-stage," says Coates.

The director of *The Rivals*, Robin Baker, uses the gay context to satirise the play's marriage-oriented power games — with mixed results. "My anxieties were that this was actually a woman in the text," explains Phillip Gates, who plays capricious Lydia Languish. "The only way I found to bridge the gap was to rely on my emotions, i.e. why would I — not he, not she — why would I do that?"

What Gates hit on was that once you put a man in the place of the opposite sex, none of the characters' emotions can simply be labelled "male", or "female". The actors have to latch on to character rather than gender (all men and women are merely players). Scott Handy found it terrifying playing Orlando, the male lead in *As You Like It*. "Playing opposite a Rosalind bigger

than me made me feel insufficiently male. Then I realised the play is also about Orlando having to play a man."

In this, the production seems to strike a chord with the confusion surrounding that late-20th century phenomenon, the "new man", the man who can change the nappy with one hand, fix the drains with the other. One of the reasons why audiences may find the piece so gripping is that in a play that explores the language of love, Rosalind's speech runs rings around Orlando. But the difference between the articulate and inarticulate male seems to be only a dress away.

"It's odd that highlighting the gender leads you quite quickly to one of the most moving lines of the play, when Ganymede promises to set Rosalind before Orlando 'human as she is'," says Donnellan. "In the terrible world we have built, we are so conscious of our differences, and here is this line reminding you that what really matters is a human being." He smiles. "For me, the issue of the actors' gender retreated until the first night, when they all walked on for the first time and I sat there in the audience thinking 'My God, what have we done? — we've got blokes in dresses'."

هكسان الأرحل



## Arabs urged to create economic bloc

BAI (R) — Arab League Secretary-General Esmat Meguid called on Monday to create an Arab economic bloc to counter international challenges such as pressure for a Middle East market to include Israel.

Dr. Abdul Meguid was addressing a conference in Cairo on the economic challenges facing the Arab world, organized by the Arab League and the Arab World Center for Studies and the Participation of the European Union.

of what is called the Middle East market, of which there has been much talk recently as well as fears voiced of losing the Arab identity," Dr. Abdul Meguid added.

The Middle East market idea, promoted by the U.S. and other Western powers as well as Israel, has so far been met with suspicion by many Arabs who see it as an attempt by the more developed Israeli economy to dominate their region.

"These fears should not scare us because we are an Arab Nation that has many capabilities and resources to deal with all suggestions with strength especially when we realize that what Israel aims to achieve depends on Arab acceptance. Israel cannot impose what it wants on the Arab World," he said.

A market that would integrate Israel into the economies of the mainly-Arab Middle East was widely discussed at a summit conference in the Moroccan city of Casablanca in October which was attended by Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and addressed by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

Dr. Abdul Meguid, a former Egyptian foreign minister, was one of the few to sound a note of caution at the Casablanca summit.

In remarks critical of those Arabs who have already shown willingness to do business with Israel, he warned all political issues, especially those relating to the Arab-Israeli conflict, should be settled before thinking of economic cooperation ties.

The Arab World sits on close to 60 per cent of the world's oil reserves, but some of its countries suffer from poverty, political instability and chaotic economies.

Dr. Abdul Meguid's message was echoed by other speakers at the conference who said that Arab states should first integrate with each other before they talk about a Middle East market and that Israel should first withdraw from all Arab lands.

Sheikh Fahim Al Qassimi, secretary-general of the Gulf Cooperation Council, called for a strong Arab economic bloc.

"The peace process has imposed political and economic challenges... we have to be ready to deal with the challenges to reach the desired development," he said.

Sheikh Fahim was asked what the GCC states—Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Qatar and Bahrain—thought of the Middle East market idea. "It is premature to talk

about this at a time when Israel occupies parts of the Arab World, expands its settlements and owns weapons of mass destruction. The climate now is not appropriate for an economic normalisation with Israel," he said.

Several speakers spoke of the need to further boost economic relations between the Arab World and the European Union (EU).

Robert Houlston, director of the Middle East Commission of the European Union, said that 60 to 70 per cent of Arab exports go to EU countries. He urged Arabs to set up an economic bloc which would strengthen their international trade relations.

"Trade relations exist (between Arab and EU countries) on an individual basis. What is missing is free trade between Arab countries themselves," he pointed out.

rency was strongest from banks or their corporate clients in London and New York.

On the plus sides, the Saudi government announced bold reforms on new year's day raising prices on heavily subsidised cuts including fuel and water — measures long called for by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), bankers and diplomats.

It said spending and the budget deficit would decline.

Dealers in Saudi Arabia also view statements like those by Sheikh Abal Khalil as important, since he put his prestige on the line. Similar remarks cooled speculation in early 1994.

"The Saudis don't like to reward speculation," one said.

The pressure on the rial surprised bankers and economists in the kingdom who saw the government's measures as positive overall and conducive to greater transparency and consequently greater credibility for government economic policies.

But on the negative side, economists and bankers pointed to the fact there is a deficit at all after the government gave the impression a year ago its 1994 budget would be in balance.

The 1995 budget spoke of a 40 billion riyal (\$10.7 billion) 1994 deficit falling to 15 billion riyals (\$4 billion) this year on spending of 150 billion riyals (\$40 billion).

Remarks by King Fahd Sunday night also called into question the durability of the reforms.

## Saudi riyal speculation down but questions remain

DUBAI (R) — Speculation against the Saudi riyal declined Monday but has not been eradicated as the world's financial markets assessed the seriousness of recent reforms.

Saudi Finance Minister Mohammad Abal Khalil stated categorically in Monday's edition of the London-based newspaper Al Hayat that there would be no devaluation of the riyal. "It is out of the question."

Riyal-dollar swap rates — which rise when speculation of a devaluation builds as people question the strength of the Saudi economy — fell as soon as his remarks hit financial screens.

But the market was still unsettled, with dealers saying pressure against Saudi currency was strongest from banks or their corporate clients in London and New York.

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Remarks by King Fahd Sunday night also called into question the durability of the reforms.

The monarch, who had cut gasoline prices shortly after the Gulf war in an apparent bid to carry public favour, said the government hoped to return soon to reducing the price of everything from water to electricity to commodities.

"Once again, these (price) increases are temporary increases until matters return to balance and everything returns to normal," he said.

"I'm asking the citizens to help the state and this will be returned to him and matters will be returned to what they were. There is no escape from one of two things — that either we burden ourselves with loans which we cannot escape from paying, or we ask for God's help and for the patience of citizens for a short period — God willing — until the situation returns to normal," the king said.

Sheikh Abal Khalil said that seeing the new measures as belt-tightening was an "exaggeration. I think 'rationalising spending' is a more appropriate term (which is) not to the extent of tightening belts."

The Cyprus-based Middle East Economic Survey (MEES) commented Monday: "The 1995 budget leaves no doubt that the Saudi financial authorities are prepared to take strong action to tackle their country's financial imbalances."

"Nevertheless, the budget is far from being a total solution to Saudi problems," it noted.

## Indonesia's economic gap biggest threat to unity

KARTA (R) — Indonesia's growing gap between rich and poor — and religious or ethnic differences is most likely to threaten country's unity and stability, Planning Minister Rudianto Kartasasmita said.

"Factors which can disturb nation's stability and unity in my opinion are not religion and race any more, cause we have passed that stage, but economic gaps," said in a speech obtained Reuters Monday.

He said the threat of disintegration in mainly Muslim Indonesia, a multi-ethnic nation of 188 million people, would increase if only a few

enjoyed the fruits of development.

"The threat of disintegration is bigger than if all the people are facing deficiency equally," he added. "Therefore, building small-scale economies, eradicating poverty and pushing for development in underdeveloped regions must become the first development agenda in facing globalisation."

Mr. Giandjar, an influential minister, said last August the potentially explosive income gap was widening and would probably worsen without steps to support small and medium-sized businesses.

## Kuwait's 93/94 budget overshoots targets

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait spent \$2 billion more than its budgeted expenditure in the last fiscal year and earned \$204 million more than projected, the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) said Sunday.

It quoted a report from the Audit Bureau, which reports to parliament, as saying actual spending had overshot budget projections by 614 million dinars (\$2.0 billion) in the 1993/94 fiscal year that ended on June 30 — 15.5 per cent higher than the planned 3,937 billion (\$13.1 billion) spending.

Oil income was less than expected but revenue from

state services and corporate taxes on foreign firms supported the 96 billion dinars (\$321 million) fall in oil revenue, it said.

Revenue increased by 61 million dinars in the 1993/94 fiscal year from initial projections of 2,713 billion (\$9.0 billion). It did not say if the revenue figure was net or gross.

Oil provides Kuwait with more than 90 per cent of its national revenue. A 1976 law requires 10 per cent of revenue to be transferred to an investment fund designed to finance the emirate after its oil runs out over a century from now.

The emirate's parliament had approved a projected deficit of 1,223 billion dinars (\$4.1 billion) that year.

The watchdog's report did not provide an authoritative deficit figure. Economists said the deficit increased by about 550 million (\$1.839 billion).

The emirate is projecting a 1,502 billion dinars (\$5 billion) net budget deficit in 1994/95. The government says it plans to annul its budget gap by the year 2000.

Economists say such a step would require serious measures by the government affecting welfare benefits.

Officials see a need to introduce taxes to the emirate's 1.7 million population but say that would not happen in the near future in order not to hamper the sluggish economy. There is no income tax but corporate tax is levied on non-Kuwaiti concerns.

The emirate provides its nationals with free education and health services and applies generous subsidies on essential services. Gasoline is cheaper than bottled water.

Gulf war-related expenses, including repairing damaged oilfields cost Kuwait tens of billions of dollars and more than halved its once large foreign investment empire.

## Sri Lanka announces major privatisation package

COLOMBO (AFP) — Sri Lanka President Chandrika Kumaratunga has announced a sweeping privatisation programme to sell key state-run services, including aviation, transport and insurance.

In her first policy statement to parliament, Ms. Kumaratunga declared her new government will also end the state monopoly on power generation and hand over infrastructure development projects to the private sector.

"The government will embark upon a major programme of selective and carefully planned privatisation of public sector enterprises in 1994," Ms. Kumaratunga said in her 33-page policy statement to the 225-member assembly.

The money earned from the sale of state enterprises will be used to reduce the country's debt servicing burden, Ms. Kumaratunga said, adding that she hoped greater privatisation would lead to more foreign investment.

The opposition United National Party (UNP) legislators thumped tables as she announced the privatisation moves. The UNP's privatisation policy, known by the euphemism of "people's privatisation," had earlier been criticised by Ms. Kumaratunga.

"Where are your leftist policies?" opposition backbenchers interrupted, referring to leftist partners in Ms. Kumaratunga's People's Alliance (PA) coalition, which was earlier seen as a left-leaning socialist party.

However, Ms. Kumaratunga went beyond the reforms introduced by the UNP and said the government would for the first time see foreign-funded BOO (build, own and operate) and BOT (build, operate and transfer) projects shortly.

"Privatisation will not only save and augment public resources for essential public investment, but will also enhance investment, employment and the quality of service in the privatised sectors and the economy as a whole," she said.

Ms. Kumaratunga said the government will end some of its industrial and trading activities in sugar, paper, fertilizer and milk and also enter into long-term management leases with private companies to manage its plantations.

The government planned to maintain a small stake in the privatised ventures to safeguard the interests of workers, she said. But she asked trade unions to agree on a two-year moratorium on wages.

"Our government needs at least two years to set the economy in motion. We therefore request the employees to arrive at a tripartite agreement for a moratorium on wages for a period of two years," the president said.

"This would give the government the space to set effectively in motion our development programmes and thereby find solutions for our present economy problems," she said.

She also vowed there will be no increase in corporate and personal income taxes, currently at a high of 38 per cent, and announced that import tariffs will be gradually reduced to 15 per cent by 1998.

Local business leaders called for quick action following the announcement of a sweeping privatisation package and a promise of no new taxes.

"It is very necessary that the statement is implemented speedily to create confidence and encourage private investment," Patrick Amarasinghe, chairman of the Federation of Chambers of Commerce here said.

He described Ms. Kumaratunga's move with the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) as a "courageous step." He said the establishment of peace would make Sri Lanka an attractive business prospect.

Market analysts predicted that foreign players on the Colombo stock exchange would await the February budget before rushing back.

"The fundamental obstacle to attracting foreign investment is Sri Lanka's costly and prolonged ethnic conflict," Ms. Kumaratunga told parliament while vowing to grant greater autonomy to Tamils to end the bloodshed.

She entered into a truce with LTTE supremo Velupillai Prabhakaran from Sunday to clear the way for political negotiations to end the secessionist war which has claimed over 30,000 lives in the past 23 years.

However, despite the war in the island's northern and eastern regions, the economy in the rest of the country has grown at an average six per cent in recent years thanks to a free-market economy introduced by the previous regime.

## HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR TUESDAY, JANUARY 10, 1995

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Flight Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Two minor good aspects make you more enthused about the work you are required to do today and it is more than likely that you will get better results than expected. Mid-evening is the best time to spend with your mate.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19) Your creative thoughts may not be as practical as you think, so study them well before trying to put them in practice. Be sensible.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) Avoid a disagreement at home and get out into the world of activity. Try to accomplish something practical and be wise in doing so.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 21) You have to complete some promises you have made early and then you can handle the business of the day wisely and very efficient.

CANCER (June 22 to July 21) You may want something which is too expensive, so stay within your budget, and tonight enjoy your mate at home.

LEO (July 22 to August 21) Keep silent even though you do not agree with what the boss is doing, otherwise you can get into trouble. Control your temper.

VIRGO (August 22 to September 22) This is a good day for planning to expand, but be sure you have the right perspective. Don't waste valuable time foolishly.

LIBRA (September 23 to October 22) One who is generous and an expert can point the way to greater profits for you in business. Be more open-minded to new ideas.

SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21) Don't interfere in a disagreement between an associate and an official, otherwise you can get into big trouble which is not wise.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21) Some new idea or plan can be very important to your advancement. Don't waste time with details over some new idea or project.

CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 20) Although you want to have a good time, it is best to handle business affairs which can help you to make progress for the future.

AQUARIUS (January 21 to February 19) Discuss with a wise partner how best to gain public prestige in the days ahead and steer clear of a quarrel at home.

PISCES (February 20 to March 20) Plan your day so that you can handle vital tasks and have meetings which can give a wider scope to your activities you are involved in.

Birthstone of January: Garnet — Rose Quartz

**- Lunch Invitation At Turino**

**- Confront him at Turino**

**He'll take it!**



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**Andy Capp**

HERE'S THE WORLD WAR I FLYING ACE ZOOMING THROUGH THE AIR ABOVE ENEMY LINES...

I GOT A LETTER FROM MOM TODAY... SHE ALWAYS WORRIES ABOUT ME...

SHE SAID NOT TO FLY TOO HIGH...

**tt'n'Jeff**

DON'T KNOW WHETHER TO BELIEVE YOU OR NOT, MALCOLM...

IF ONLY I COULD BE SURE YOU'RE GENUINE...

I ASK YOU... BUT...

SHE'S GOT NO WORRIES THERE... HE'S GENUINELY PHONY!

I FOUND THIS FOUR-LEAF CLOVER SO I WENT TO THE RACES!...

AFTER ALL, I TOLD YOU ABOUT GAMBLING... THE ODDS ARE AGAINST YOU! YOU CAN'T WIN!

AND I'LL BET YOU WENT AND BET YOUR WHOLE WEEK'S SALARY!

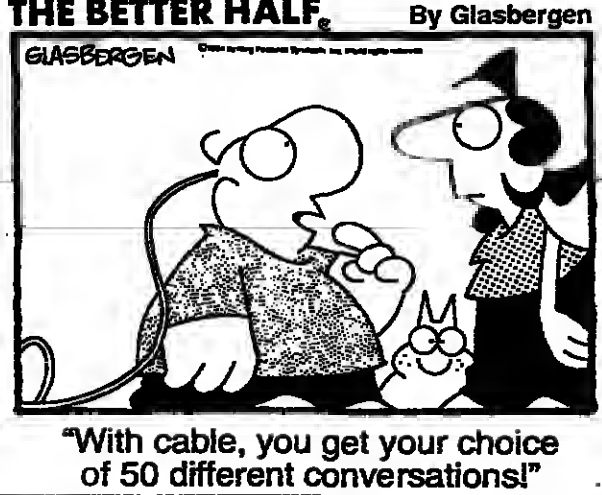
WON'T MUFFY TEN BUCKS!

AND DID YOU WIN?

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Al Capone

**THE BETTER HALF** By Glasbergen



"With cable, you get your choice of 50 different conversations!"

**JUMBLE** THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME By Henri Arnold and Mike Anglin

Unscramble these four jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

NICEW

DYLOM

RAWTEY

MAYLIF

Print answer here: \_\_\_\_\_

Yesterday's Jumbles: TOPAZ, LUCID, COOL

Answer: How the painter made WITH A SECOND

**THE Daily Crossword** by Janet R. Bender

ACROSS

1 Shopping complex

5 Immediately afterward

6 Tennis payments

14 Right range

15 Uncle

16 City on the Missouri

17 Washington

20 One or more

21 Where

22 involve

23 None of

24 Spicy

25 Place or nation

26 June 6, 1964

27 Japanese drama

28 Audible

30 Span

31 Except

32 avoid

33 Almost plant

34 Away from the end

40 Really strange

41 Exact part

42 Conf. York's henchmen

43 Switched table

44 Wides

45 Shagreened

46 Rhetoric

47 Love god

48 Author Umberto

49 Patch

50 Eucaly

51 Bird or hush

52 Festive like

53 Lay flats

54 Mailed

55 Times in one

56 Crib

57 Furry

58 Darghest

59 Olive oil

60 Paper Post dog

61 Bunches

62 Conscience knot

63 Out of the

64 Completely

65 change

66 Ancient Celtic priest

67 Saying

68 Bitter island

69 Bitter drug

70 Longing

71 Gull

72 Gull

73 Gull

74 Gull

75 Gull

76 Gull

77 Gull

78 Gull

79 Gull

80 Gull

81 Gull

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100 Gull



**Mighty mouse**  
halts airliner

STOCKHOLM (AP) — A Swedish-made plane, a Boeing 737, was forced to land in New York on Monday after a tiny mouse was found on board. The mouse was found on the forward fuselage of the plane, which was en route to Sweden. The plane was carrying 110 passengers and crew. The mouse was found by a passenger who reported it to the pilot. The plane was then diverted to New York, where it landed safely. The mouse was captured and killed. The incident has caused concern among airlines and passengers, but officials say the plane was safe to fly.

**Swedish album**  
Lion King soundtracks top 1994 U.S. hits

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Swedish music has dominated the U.S. charts in 1994. The Lion King soundtrack, featuring the voices of the main cast, topped the list. Other top hits included the album "The Lion King: The Gift" by the same cast, and "The Lion King: The Circle of Life" by the same cast. The Lion King soundtrack was the best-selling album in the U.S. for the year.

**China's 'robber king' gets life for crime school**

SHANGHAI (AP) — A Chinese man, known as the "robber king," has been sentenced to life in prison for leading a criminal gang. The man, named Zhang, was the leader of a gang that operated in the Shanghai area. The gang was responsible for a series of robberies and other crimes. Zhang was sentenced to life in prison for his role in the crimes.

**Beijing inhales 3,040 years ago**

BEIJING (AP) — The city of Beijing is inhaling the same air that was breathed by its inhabitants 3,040 years ago. Scientists have found that the air in Beijing is the same as the air that was breathed by the ancient Chinese. This is because the air in Beijing is so polluted that it has become a permanent part of the city's atmosphere.

**Hello officer, I've stolen the baby**

SAINT-ETIENNE, France (AP) — A woman in France has been charged with stealing a baby. The woman, named Marie, was charged with stealing a baby from a hospital. The baby was found in Marie's home. Marie is accused of stealing the baby and keeping it in her home. Marie is currently in custody and is facing charges of child abduction.

# Business Beat

A review of economic news from the Arabic press

## SSC hikes earnings from tourism investments

★ The Social Security Corporation (SSC) earned JD 2.41 million from its tourism investments during the first nine months of last year, compared to JD 2.45 million earned during 1993. The SSC's investments in the tourism sector amount to JD 21 million, of which JD 16.75 million are investments in hotels and restaurants. The 19 resthouses together made a net profit of 225,000 during the January-September period in 1994. Only three resthouses, at Dibbene, Azraq and Ishtafena, recorded losses and the SSC is putting them up for sale or suretyship although they only account for 5.4 per cent of the total investment in the tourism sector (Al Aswad).

★ The American government donated two oil drills to the Natural Resources Authority (NRA). The drills can go to a depth of 7,000 metres, nearly 2,500 metres deeper than by the drills being used now by the NRA (Al Dustour).

★ A Chinese economic delegation will begin a visit today (Tuesday) and will hold talks with officials at the Federation of Jordanian Chambers of Commerce and at the Amman Chamber of Industry to boost trade and set up joint projects (Al Dustour).

★ The Ministry of Supply is inviting offers to supply 50,000 tonnes of barley, to arrive before Feb. 5, 1995. The last date to submit offers is Jan. 11, 1995. The Kingdom purchases most of the barley from Syria which supplied Jordan with 300,000 tonnes last year. Syria is currently shipping 200,000 tonnes of barley that was contracted directly between the two countries. Traders estimate the deal was priced at \$85 per tonne. Jordan's annual imports of barley are about 500,000 tonnes (Al Ra'i).

★ The ministerial committee entrusted to prepare a study on transforming the Natural Resources Authority (NRA) to a shareholding company, entirely owned by the state, has presented its report to the council of ministers for approval and submission to the Lower House of Parliament. An official at the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources said the oil exploration section at the NRA would be transformed into a petroleum and gas company that, in the first stage, would be totally owned by the government. At an advanced stage, a portion of its shares would be floated for public subscription in a move towards a total transfer of the company to the private sector. Studies are also under way to privatise the Jordan Electricity Authority and the Telecommunications Corporation (Al Dustour).

★ The Ministry of Water and Irrigation is awaiting recommendations from a special committee set up to study changes for irrigation water with a view to achieve fairness and avoid wastage and not harm small farmers. According to the minister, charges for drinking and irrigation water will remain at about the same level for most farmers. Irrigation water used to cost six fils a cubic metre before it was raised to 15 fils. A further increase, to 36 fils per cubic metre, was due to take effect at the beginning of this year but was stopped pending the above mentioned study (Al Ra'i).

★ The Jordan Export Development and Trade Centres Corporation invites all interested industrialists and businessmen to participate in Europartnership which will be held in Dortmund-Germany between March 20 to 21, 1995. More than 350 German companies from different commercial and industrial sectors will be taking part.

## East Europe farmers are biggest losers from reforms

VIENNA (AFP) — Farmers are proving to be the biggest losers as eastern Europe wrenches its Soviet-style planned economies apart to tailor them to the free market, five years after headline communism collapsed. Freeing of prices and drastic drops in farm subsidies set off a dizzying upwards spiral of prices and pushed domestic demand downwards. The final blow to farm exports came with the loss of the traditional Soviet market because the countries of the successor Commonwealth of Independent States had no foreign exchange. Access to West European markets has run into protectionist barriers thrown up by the European Union (EU), although the east Europeans used to have regular surplus trade with EU members up until 1990. The main farm produce exporters are — or were — Bulgaria, Poland, Romania and Hungary. "Now conditions have worsened for them on international agricultural markets because Western states have higher subsidies, advantageous credits for farm exports, and aggressive sales strategies," explained Zdenek Lukas of Vienna's Economic Research Institute.

## Abu Dhabi starts liquefied gas sales to Europe

ABU DHABI (R) — Abu Dhabi Gas Liquefaction Co. (Adgas) is selling its liquefied natural gas (LNG) in Europe for the first time, the company's Adgas news magazine said. "Agreement has been reached with ... Distrigaz of Belgium and Gaz de France for the sale and purchase of three cargoes of LNG over the next three months," said the magazine. "This is the first time for Adgas to enter the European market," it said, adding that the first cargo had been loaded in late December. The magazine said the Abu Dhabi company sold LNG not needed by TEPCO to third parties.

Financial Markets			
U.S. Dollar in International Markets			
Currency	New York Close	Tokyo Close	9/11/95
Sterling Pound*	1.5495	1.5515**	
Deutsche Mark	1.5632	1.5615	
Swiss Franc	1.3160	1.3162**	
French Franc	5.4800	5.5963**	
Japanese Yen	101.38	101.15	
European Currency Unit	1.2173	1.2171**	

Precious Metals			
	USD/Oz	JD/Oz	9/11/95
Gold	372.40	7.50	8.64
Silver	8.64	0.110	

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin			
Currency	Buy	Offer	9/11/95
U.S. Dollar	0.7020	0.7040	
Sterling Pound	1.0226	1.0240	
Deutsche Mark	0.4492	0.4514	
Swiss Franc	0.5595	0.5586	
French Franc	0.1501	0.1508	
Japanese Yen	0.0036	0.0031	
Dutch Guilder	0.4006	0.4026	
Swedish Krona	0.0480	0.0459	
Italian Lira*	0.0480	0.0459	
Belgian Franc	0.0480	0.0459	

Other Currencies			
Currency	Buy	Offer	9/11/95
Baharal Dinar	1.8460	1.8460	
Lebanese Lira*	0.041740	0.042250	
Saudi Riyal	0.1665	0.1680	
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.3000	2.3600	
Qatari Riyal	0.1914	0.1930	
Egyptian Pound	0.2000	0.2150	
Omani Riyal	1.8100	1.8200	
UAE Dirham	0.1905	0.1920	
Greek Drachma*	0.2685	0.3160	
Cypriot Pound	1.4040	1.5050	

## LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at mid-session on the London Foreign Exchange and bullion markets Monday.

U.S. \$1.00 costs	1.4028/38	Canadian dollar
	1.5588/98	Deutschemarks
	1.7474/84	Dutch guilders
	1.3076/86	Swiss francs
	32.08/12	Belgian francs
	5.3818/68	French francs
	1629.40/4	Italian lire
	100.88/98	Japanese yen
	7.5175/75	Swedish crowns
	6.8010/60	Norwegian crowns
	6.1295/45	Danish crowns
One sterling	\$1.5304/0	
One ounce of gold	\$372.40/372.90	

Farming subsidies in Eastern Europe are scarcely a fifth of what Western governments pay their farmers. In Hungary, agriculture accounts for 17 per cent of gross domestic product and employs 19 per cent of the national workforce. It has slashed farm subsidies from 44 per cent in 1987 to eight per cent (\$265 million) in 1993 of the value of production. The government is planning to push them back up gradually to 20 per cent as a way of getting exports to pick up to \$1.6 billion for the first 10 months of the year, covering 15 per cent of output. Of that percentage, 45 per cent is earmarked for the European market. Half a dozen years ago, as a leader in the field, Hungary was exporting some 30 per cent of its farm produce. One of its rare competitive products on the Western market is wheat, grown in especially favourable conditions. Bulgaria was an exporter five years ago, but agricultural reforms have brought unprecedented shortages and necessitated massive farm imports. The livestock industry is in a disastrous state because of a drastic reduction in herd numbers, and milk production has halved since 1989. Since 1993, the price of meat has gone up 23 times, of milk 34 times and of bread 22 times. Romania had three years of stagnation, marked by production slumps and massive food imports, but began to pick up in 1993 and last year got back to self-sufficiency. Milk and its by-products were scarce because many peasants killed off their stock after the revolution for fear their animals would be confiscated, Mr. Lukas noted. Poland is cutting farm output, with 1993 figures 13 per cent below the average for 1986 to 1993. Subsidies are down to 10 per cent, though the government has restored guaranteed prices for wheat, milk and rye. Mr. Lukas said Poland wanted to remain self-sufficient in the agricultural sector, though bad harvests in 1993 left it with a \$500 million deficit. Western rivals will continue to be subsidised. Farm output thus went down 22 per cent in 1993 and subsidies are one-sixth of what they were before 1989. Farm and food exports for that year, 41 per cent sent to the European Union, netted \$36 million. In adjoining Slovakia, farming and related agribusiness are battling to survive. Production slipped seven per cent in 1993 and new Agriculture Minister Peter Baco warned that without improvements this coming year, "Slovakia will topple into food dependence." The 1993 agribusiness figures were heavily in deficit, with exports to EU countries worth \$54 million and imports worth \$155 million.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET			
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHEIKH SAH			
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ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 09/01/1995			
COMPANY'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES TRADED	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
ARAB BANK	139650	163.750	163.750
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	3196	13755	13755
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK / NEW	59311	245025	245025
BANK OF JORDAN	2078	7869	3780
MIDDLE EAST INVESTMENT BANK	1500	2400	1.660
THE HOUSING BANK	1550	8925	5.720
JORDAN KIWAT BANK	15579	19904	3.000
JORDAN GULF BANK	150	164	1.640
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	27656	84839	3.750
UNION BANK FOR SAVING & INVESTMENT	250	1275	5.000
BEIT ELNAH SAVINGS INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING	1900	6093	3.260
AMMAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	10450	15806	1.940
ARAB BANKING CORPORATION/JORDAN	700	2835	4.170
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK	5150	8728	1.700
BANKS SECTOR	126180	557286	INDEX NUMBER: 159.21
JORDAN FRENCH INSURANCE	1450	3569	2.470
ARAB UNION INTERNATIONAL INSURANCE	9312	28411	2.730
AL-NISR AL-ARAB INSURANCE	200	950	5.000
INSURANCE SECTOR	10962	29929	INDEX NUMBER: 137.42
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	6672	10404	1.570
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER / NEW	14958	22450	1.510
JORDAN DISTRICT ELECTRICITY	200	1930	5.500
JORDAN ALUMINUM MINERAL	3450	9982	2.950
ARAB INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	10050	51209	5.080
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	600	1482	2.500
REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT	50	69	5.770
JORDAN GULF REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT	5750	7418	1.320
MACHINERY EQUIP. RENTING & MAINTENANCE	500	375	780
UNITED MIDDLE EAST & COMMODORE HOTELS	11500	26280	2.420
ARAB INTER. FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	8500	29225	2.450
SERVICES SECTOR	62230	161195	INDEX NUMBER: 135.21
ATTANQUEP CONST. MATERIAL MANUFACTURING	750	1013	1.370
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	29322	86510	2.960
JORDAN PHOSPHATE MINES	1250	3650	2.920
THE ARAB POTASH/NEW	2350	12930	5.500
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	7700	36244	8.850
JORDAN TANNING	1260	9420	7.200
THE INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL	400	1740	4.350
THE JORDAN WOODSTOCK KILLS	6258	50956	8.030
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	14639	5700	1.370
JORDAN CERAMIC INDUSTRIES	1000	6300	6.250
THE JORDAN PIPES MANUFACTURING	250	700	2.800
ARAB CHEMICAL DETERGENTS INDUSTRIES	200	3200	16.000
SPINNING & WEAVING	3687	10077	7.720
ARAB INDUSTRIES	2650	7386	2.840
DRP AL DANA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	22000	23308	16.800
INVESTMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE	25204	77514	1.070
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	69700	56010	970
ARAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING	5800	8354	1.460
JORDAN INDUSTRIES & MATCHES/JIMCO	17200	14558	860
NATIONAL CABLE & WIRE MANUFACTURING	650	2467	5.380
JORDAN SUPPLY-CHEMICALS	110	2655	2.030
FAWHER INVESTMENT	250	450	1.820
UNIVERSAL MODERN INDUSTRIES	5200	21868	4.260
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES CO.	11000	24072	2.250
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR	194876	446750	INDEX NUMBER: 130.10
GRAND TOTAL	384248	1195160	INDEX NUMBER: 145.38
NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET	226823		
VALUE TRADED IN PARALLEL MARKET	248012		

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**UNRWA UHB(A) VACANCIES**

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East requires at its Headquarters Branch (offices located in Bayader/Wadi Seer).

**1. PURCHASING OFFICERS (6 posts: Grades 11-13)**

(a) Monthly take-home pay ranging from about JD340 up plus Dependency allowance, plus Provident Fund from about JD.80 per month payable at end of service; as well as compulsory medical insurance.

(b) Incumbents will be responsible for the international procurement of supplies and equipment, coordinating with various UNRWA offices in English (main working language).

(c) Essential & highly desirable qualifications: University degree in Public or Business Administration; knowledge of international shipping regulations; packing systems and procurement technology; five years experience in a large purchasing activity; and working knowledge of computerised purchasing and material management systems. Fluency in English and Arabic is essential.

**2. SENIOR SUPPLY OFFICER (BASIC COMMODITIES & INSURANCE)**

(a) Grade 18: Monthly take-home pay starting about JD.680 plus Dependency allowance, plus Provident Fund of about JD.165 per month payable at end of service; as well as compulsory medical insurance.

(b) Is responsible for the procurement of all basic commodities required for UNRWA programmes; also is responsible for all insurance coverage and claims processing; controls stocks and logistics of basic commodities to meet Agency programme needs.

(c) Essential & highly desirable qualifications: University degree in Business Administration or related subject; training in supply management, international shipping marine, vehicle and property insurance, accounting and related EDP applications; 8 years' experience in the application of the academic knowledge acquired; demonstrated ability to operate PCs and standard Agency software in the context of supply operations. Very good knowledge of English & Arabic is essential.

**3. SUPPLY OFFICERS (3 posts: Grades 13 & 15 in Basic Commodities & Insurance, and another in General Stores)**

(a) Monthly take-home pay ranging from about JD.420 up, plus Dependency allowance, plus Provident Fund of about JD.100 per month payable at end of service; as well as compulsory medical insurance.

(b) Assisting the respective Senior Supply Officers with the procurement, shipping, storing and insuring of supplies and commodities required in Agency programmes; co-ordinating, exercising procurement progress control and monitoring cyclic purchasing activities.

(c) Essential & highly desirable qualifications: University degree in commerce, business administration or related discipline; six years' experience in application of this academic knowledge; demonstrated ability to operate PC and standard software for supply operations; good knowledge of shipping and commercial law and practice, including documentation, and port operations. Fluency in English and Arabic is essential.

**4. ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER (Supply Division)**

(a) Grade 14: Monthly take-home pay starting about JD.470 plus Dependency allowance, plus Provident Fund of about JD.110 per month payable at end of service; as well as compulsory medical insurance.

(b) Responsible for the administrative functions of the Supply Division such as budgeting, expenditure monitoring including the efficient use of communication services, assists with Supply personnel matters, maintains the register & locator cards of equipment at UHB (Amman), arranges for testing of commodities (quality control).

(c) Essential & highly desirable qualifications: University degree in Business Administration or related discipline; five years' experience in administrative post, of which at least two in supply-related work. Demonstrated ability to operate PC and standard supply software. Very good knowledge of English and Arabic is essential.

**5. REALITY DATA BASE ADMINISTRATOR:**

(a) Grade 14: Monthly take-home pay starting about JD.470 plus Dependency allowance, plus Provident Fund of about JD.110 per month payable at end of service; as well as compulsory medical insurance.

(b) Responsible for the maintenance of all support files in the data base (including e.g. catalogues, lists of suppliers) and technical information (such as global & security settings, user authorization tables); provides on-the-job PC training of supply staff and supports the users.

(c) Essential & highly desirable qualifications: University degree in computer science or a related subject; 5 years' experience in applying this academic knowledge, three years' experience on PC and Novell LAN at user level, including basic hardware operation; knowledge of data base management concepts; demonstrated ability to operate PCs and knowledge of standard supply software.

Very good knowledge of English and Arabic is essential.

**6. INSURANCE ASSISTANT (Basic Commodities)**

(a) Grade 11: Monthly take-home pay starting about JD.340 plus Dependency allowance, plus Provident Fund of about JD.80 per month payable at end of service; as well as compulsory medical insurance.

(b) Assists with marine, vehicle, fire and other insurance required by the Agency; processes and follows up on claims from insurers; collects, verifies, processes data related to insurance matters including entry into and verification of PC records; monitors related shipping documentation; generally, performs all assisting functions for effective insurance coverage of Agency property of all kinds.

(c) Essential & highly desirable qualifications: University degree in Business Administration or related discipline; course work in insurance. At least five years experience in supply operations of which at least three years must have been insurance claims processing at responsible level; demonstrated ability to operate PCs and standard software and applications as used in the Agency. Very good knowledge of English and Arabic is essential.

Applications must be in English and accompanied by a duly completed United Nations Personal History Form (available from UNRWA or U.N. offices), must mention the post for which the application is made, and should be submitted by close of business (15:00 hrs) on Thursday, 26 January 1995 to:

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P.O. Box 148157 (Wadi Seer)  
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Minnesota Timberwolves guard #44 Winston Garland can't get a shot off with Orlando Magic's Shaquille O'Neal standing over him (AFP photo)

## Pistons no match for Magic, despite Shaquille's flu

AUBURN HILLS, Michigan (R) — Overmatched and undermanned, the Detroit Pistons had nothing going for them except Shaquille O'Neal's flu. It wasn't enough.

O'Neal scored 10 of his 23 points during a 16-4 second-quarter run that blew the game open and Anfernee Hardaway added 26 points as the Orlando Magic cruised to a 108-88 win Sunday.

"That was the ugliest 23 points I've scored," O'Neal said. "I was really weak and tired. I'm hoping a day off will help. I really didn't get warm until the second quarter and even that didn't last that long."

Orlando has won nine of its last 10 games, including four straight, and has the best record in the league (26-6). The Pistons, who lost their eighth straight, were without rookie forward Grant Hill, who has an injured left foot. The Pistons fell for the 13th time in their last 14 games and have a six-game home losing slide.

Detroit had already lost three key players — point guard Lindsey Hunter (broken ankle) and centres Mark West (arthroscopic knee surgery) and Oliver Miller (broken hand).

The Magic.

"It's not easy to get up for

games like this," said Orlando coach Brian Hill. "But we're looking at it as a challenge, because we know everybody wants to knock us off now."

O'Neal was 7-of-11 from the line and 8-of-16 from the field in just 31 minutes.

"Shaqui was very sick last night and this morning," Hill said. "He missed the shoot-around, so I didn't want to use him any more than I had to."

Hardaway was 8-of-13 from the floor and Horace Grant added 14 points and 14 rebounds.

"I was kind of scared about this game," said Hardaway. "You don't want to come in and lose to a team that's this beat up. We knew they would play very hard because they were so badly overmatched."

Detroit was led by Joe Dumars' 19 points.

"We hung in there pretty tough at first, but they had more people and just wore us down," a disappointed Dumars said. "It's hard playing with nine. We don't have enough people to go out and compete."

In New York, Patrick Ewing and Hubert Davis each had 22 points to pace the Knicks to their season-high sixth straight win, 102-87 over the Minnesota Timber-

wolves.

John Starks added 21 points for New York, which extended its winning streak over Minnesota to eight games.

Isiah Rider had 21 points and Greg Foster added 15 to lead the Timberwolves, who have dropped five straight.

Davis was 7-of-8 from the field, including a career-high 6-of-7 from 3-point range. The Knicks tied a team-record with 12 3-pointers (12-of-24).

In Denver, Reggie Williams hit a 3-pointer in overtime to give the Nuggets the lead for good in a 102-96 victory over the Milwaukee Bucks.

Williams, Robert Pack and Bryant Stith each scored 16 points for the Nuggets, who have won four straight against the Bucks.

Glenn Robinson had 21 points and Eric Murdock netted 20 for Milwaukee, which has dropped eight of its last 11 games.

The Nuggets sent the game into overtime with 8.1 seconds left on a layup by Brian Williams.

Denver had a chance to win the game with fourteenth of a second left, but Stith missed two free throws after Marty Colson was called for a deliberate foul.

The Nuggets still had one more chance to win it after retaining possession on the deliberate foul, but a dunk by Brian Williams came just after time expired.

At Los Angeles, Vladi Divac had 21 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists for his third career triple-double as the surging Lakers won their fifth straight, 122-105 over the Miami Heat.

Anthony Peeler contributed a season-high 23 points off the bench and rookie Eddie Jones scored 20 as the Lakers, who won for the 10th time in 12 games, played their second straight contest without leading scorer Cedric Ceballos. Ceballos missed Friday's game against Milwaukee with back spasms.

Six Lakers scored in double figures, including George Lynch, starting in place of Ceballos, who had 18, Nick Van Exel (17) and Elden Campbell (13).

Glen Rice had 26 points and John Salley added 19 as Miami lost for the fourth time in five games and lowered its road record to a league-worst-2-14.

## No hope seen for NHL season

NEW YORK (AFP) — Players and officials expect cancellation of the National Hockey League (NHL) season, suspended for 100 days in a labour dispute, following Sunday's unanimous union rejection of a final offer by owners.

"I don't see any basis for any optimism," NHL veteran player Mike Gartner said. "I still have a slight glimmer of hope. But as it stands right now, I don't know what to base it on."

National Hockey League commissioner Gary Bettman and union director Boh Goodenow will meet here Monday, their first face-to-face talks since December 6, in a last-moment bid to save the season.

Owners have set a noon Tuesday (1700 GMT) deadline for acceptance of their final offer or the season will be wiped out. They had hoped to start a 50-game season on January 16.

But each side has rejected the other's so-called final offer with wide gaps in their positions, leaving little room for compromise or reason for talking.

"I don't think there is a reason for optimism," Goodenow said. "We're in a serious, very difficult situation. We have a tremendous amount of work to do. I don't want to give the impression there is closeness. There's wide separation."

"By the same token, it's incumbent on both sides to take every step, exert every bit of energy to see if there isn't some common ground," he added. "There's no question the sport will be hurt if there is no season."

Sunday marked 100 days

## AFRICAN SOCCER

### Algeria get the better of bitter rivals Egypt

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — Algeria continued their mastery of Egypt in the African Nations' Cup at the weekend, winning a Group 4 qualifying tie 1-0 at home in driving rain.

It was Algeria's first victory in their attempt to reach the 1996 finals, and brought them level on five points with Egypt, who kept top spot because of a vastly superior goal difference.

Egypt have not beaten their North African rivals in the competition since 1969, and the defeat on a muddy July 5 stadium pitch was the fourth in a row against Algeria.

Seeking their first win under coach Rabah Madjer, a former African Footballer of the Year, Algeria broke through in the 17th minute when Bilal Dziri converted a penalty kick.

Algeria, backed by a 50,000 crowd, were the superior side throughout against opponents whose Dutch coach resigned last week because he feared for his safety in Algiers.

Nol De Ruiter quit a 15,000 dollar-a-month post after being advised by the Dutch embassy in Tunisia not to visit Algeria, where Muslim extremists are trying to topple the government.

Algeria had further cause for celebration when nearest rivals Tanzania lost 1-0 in Ethiopia to a first-half goal from Elias Juhar. Sudan defeated Uganda 3-1 in the other group match.

Cameroon, champions twice during the past decade, continue to struggle in Group 1, managing only a goalless draw with improving Malawi in the Atlantic Ocean port of Douala.

The Indomitable Lions have scored only once in three matches and face a difficult game in Zimbabwe later this month.

Zaire achieved their first victory at the fourth attempt, defeating Lesotho 3-0 in Kinshasa after making a dream start when Roger Lukaku scored from a second-minute penalty kick.

Mali retained top spot in Group 6 by winning 3-1 in Botswana while Guinea shrugged off two consecutive defeats to outclass Namibia 3-0 in Conakry, where all the goals came after half-time.

The clash of the Portuguese-speaking nations in Luanda ended in a 1-0 triumph for Angola over Mozambique, Tula scoring the crucial goal in the 19th minute.

Surprise Group 2 pacemakers Togo could manage only a scoreless stalemate at home to Mauritania but moved one point clear of Liberia, who were idle because Guinea Bissau have withdrawn.

Senegal and Tunisia, the seeded countries, continue to occupy the lowest positions after another goalless deadlock, this time in the southern Senegalese town of Ziguinchor.

Group 3 leaders Ghana were another team not in action, and Sierra Leone moved within two points of the four-time champions by scoring twice within four minutes to overcome Gambia 2-0.

Ibora of Congo opened and closed the scoring in a 3-1 home win over Niger, conceding a 29th-minute own goal and scoring for his team in the 75th minute after Imboula had netted twice.



Argentinian Gabriel Batistuta (top) and his haircut by coach Daniel Passarella or face the Japan's Natsuka Satoshi fight for the ball are scored two goals as Argentina won 5-1 Riyadh. Batistuta, who was ordered to have a

## Laudrup leads Denmark to victory

RIYADH (AFP) — European champions Denmark beat Saudi Arabia 2-0 Sunday to destroy home hopes of lifting the Intercontinental Cup.

Danish captain Brian Laudrup, who plays for Scotland's Glasgow Rangers, scored the first goal at the end of the first half and substitute Morten Wieghorst, who also plays in Scotland, at Dundee United, scored the second in the last minute of the game.

Denmark, who failed to qualify for the World Cup last summer, dominated the Group-A game.

The Saudis, after a brilliant World Cup in which they beat Belgium and came close to upsetting Holland, were brought down to earth with a bump in their first Intercontinental Cup game, losing 2-0 to Mexico Friday.

With their second defeat Sunday they are out of contention for the title and Denmark play Mexico Tuesday to decide which team goes through to meet the winner of Group-B in the final.

Five minutes after hitting the bar from a 25-yard free kick, Laudrup pierced the defence with a 44th minute burst and slipped the ball cheekily between the goalkeeper and the net post.

Wieghorst, running hard at the defence, added the killer blow in the dying seconds when he shot into the back of

the net from close range. Saeed Owairan created the best chances for the Saudis, but wayward finishing foiled his efforts.

Meanwhile trim-looking Gabriel Batistuta opened Argentina's Cup challenge by giving Japan a footballing short-back-and-sides during a convincing 5-1 win here on Sunday.

Batistuta, ordered to have a haircut by new coach Daniel Passarella or face the axe, scored twice as the Latin American champions extended their unbeaten record since the World Cup.

For Japan, the Group B defeat meant the end of their cup ambitions after losing their opening match 3-0 to African champions Nigeria, who now meet Argentina in the decider.

New coach Daniel Passarella, a former international and traditional disciplinarian, had warned his players he wouldn't select any players with unruly locks, a decision which deprived him of a furious Claudio Caniggia.

One of Passarella's new proteges, however, soon set the ball rolling as Sambastian Rambert claimed his third goal in four internationals just after the half-hour.

Ironically, the goal was set up by the first of two glacial Batistuta blunders.

The Fiorentina-based striker, who had earlier headed

past the post from five metres, lost control of the ball inside the box only for the ball to run away to Rambert, who blasted in a left-foot drive from 10 metres.

Japanese goalkeeper Shigetatsu Matsunaga redeemed himself just before the break, going full length to deny Marcelo Escudero, but he was beaten again in injury time when Arnaldo Ortega produced a classic sidestep at the end of a sweeping move to wrongfoot the defence before lasting home.

If Japan had hoped for some respite in the second period, they did not get it as Argentina scored twice within ten minutes.

Rambert set up the third with a mazy run and shot. Matsunaga's desperate block sending the ball ballooning up in the air and allowing Batistuta to nod the ball over the line.

Then defender Jose Chamot, another Italian exile, cut in off from the left to firm home the fourth.

Kazu Miura, Japan's Genoa-based star, grabbed a 56th minute consolation goal, the side's first in the competition, that was either brilliant or extremely lucky.

He drove a free-kick on the right of the box straight and low at the wall, the defenders obliging by jumping over the ball as they anticipated a chip.

**RESULTS**

New York	102	Minnesota	87
Orlando	108	Detroit	88
Denver	102	Milwaukee	96 (OT)
LA Lakers	122	Miami	105

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## Algerian parties to present plans to resolve crisis

ROME (Agencies) — Algerian political figures meeting here said Monday that they planned to submit proposals to the Algerian people in view of resolving the political crisis and fundamentalist violence wracking their country.

Abdul Nour Ali Yahia, a spokesman for the delegates and president of the Algerian Human Rights League, said the meeting was taking place in Rome under the auspices of the Roman Catholic Sant'Egidio community because "conditions for a real dialogue that would guarantee the participation of all parties, without exclusion, do not actually exist in Algeria."

The legal and illegal opposition parties taking part in the talks include the outlawed Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) represented by Anwar Haddam, a FIS leader exiled in the United States.

Former Algerian President Ahmad Ben Bella was also in Italy, presumably to attend the talks which began Sunday.

Several other political figures were expected to arrive here this week. Mr. Ali Yahia said he still had hope that the FIS representative in Europe Rabah Kehit, based in Germany, would be allowed to travel to Italy.

He added that the FIS was seriously interested in ending the campaign of bloodshed that gripped the country after the military intervened in January 1992 to cancel the second round of general elections the FIS was poised to win.

"We are working with the view of making proposals to the Algerian people," Mr. Ali Yahia said.

The Algerian government has denounced the meeting as a means of meddling in the country's internal affairs and refused to send a representative.

But Mario Marazziti, spokesman for the Sant'Egidio community which served as mediator in the talks that ended Mozambique's civil war in October 1992, said the aim was not to interfere in Algerian affairs but rather to help resolve the political crisis.

Another Algerian opposition leader said on Monday that violence in his country could no longer be contained and urged negotiations with the army-backed government.

"We should end this disastrous spectacle for which, though in different ways, both the government and Muslim extremists are responsible," said Hocine Ait

Ahmad, secretary of the Socialist Forces Front (FFS).

"The hijacking of the Air France plane confirmed that violence cannot be contained within Algeria," Mr. Ait Ahmad told Italian radio.

"The talks should produce a concrete, democratic and peaceful plan to begin negotiations with the government," he said. He also urged parliamentary elections.

Sant'Egidio hosted a first round of talks among Algerian opposition leaders in November.

The community said on Saturday that fresh meetings were needed after an escalation in violence, including the hijacking of an Air France Airbus on Dec. 24 and the killings of four Roman Catholic priests three days later.

Western intelligence sources estimate that up to 30,000 Algerians have been killed in civil strife since the army cancelled the 1992 general election.

Nearly 70 foreigners have been killed by guerrillas since late 1993.

Algerian President Liamine Zeroual tried late last year to resolve the crisis through dialogue with Muslim fundamentalist leaders but his attempt failed.

Meanwhile, trial dates have been set for a senior FIS official and for one of the sons of the fundamentalist movement's leader Abassi Madani, Algerian judicial officials said.

Abdul Kader Hachani, head of the FIS provisional executive bureau, is to appear before the Algerian special court on Jan. 28 charged with publishing false information harmful to national interests and unity.

Mr. Hachani was arrested in January 1992 after signing a statement calling on soldiers to take part in a disobedience campaign. He has staged a number of hunger strikes to protest his detention since then without trial.

Mr. Madani's son Okba is to appear before the same court two days later charged with setting up "armed terrorist" groups. He was arrested in August 1993 in a hotel in Oran in western Algeria.

His brothers Iktal, Osama and Selmane have been sentenced to death in their absence by the Algiers court in connection with the bombing of the capital's international airport in May of that year. Their father is under house arrest.

## Syrian arms dealer tried for Achille Lauro hijack

MADRID (R) — Syrian arms dealer Monzer Al Kassir went on trial on Monday charged with piracy in connection with the 1985 hijacking by Palestinian guerrillas of the Italian liner Achille Lauro in which an American was killed.

The prosecutor has asked for 29 years in jail for Mr. Kassir, who is alleged to have financed and supplied arms to the Palestinian Liberation Front, led by Mohammad Abbas (Abu Abbas), whose guerrillas seized the ship in Egyptian waters on Oct. 7, 1985.

At the start of the hearing Mr. Kassir denied the charge, insisting his arms dealings were legal and denying he knew or had done business with Abu Abbas.

The four Achille Lauro hijackers demanded the release of Palestinian prisoners in exchange for the 600 passengers.

In the course of the hijack an American was killed.

The hijackers finally surrendered to Egyptian authorities, but a plane laid on to fly them to safety in Tunis was intercepted by United States fighters and forced to land in Italy, where the guerrillas were arrested.

The ill-fated Achille Lauro was destroyed by fire off Somalia during a cruise late last year.

Mr. Kassir, 49, who has lived in Spain since 1983 and is known as the "prince of Marbella" because of his opulent lifestyle, told reporters on arrival at Madrid's

high court he was confident justice would be done.

"Here I am as I always promised," he said. "I have confidence in justice. I have waited a long time for this day and God is great."

On Sunday the court formally ordered that Mr. Kassir continue at liberty on bail of some \$7 million, set 18 months ago, as it did not see "sufficient reason to think the accused will not appear for the hearing."

In earlier written evidence to the court, the prosecutor said Mr. Kassir's sympathy with Arab states in their conflict with Israel "led him to take an attitude of positive collaboration with the Palestine Liberation Front."

He alleged Mr. Kassir travelled in the summer of 1985 from Marbella to Warsaw, where he had an arms store, collected four Kalashnikov AK-47 rifles and eight grenades and delivered them to Abu Abbas in Tunis.

Mr. Kassir was arrested in June 1992 on the orders of investigating Judge Baltasar Garçon on suspicion of links with "international terrorism," illegal possession of arms, trading in stolen cars and forging documents.

He was remanded in custody, his bank accounts were blocked and his property, including several Costa del Sol villas, was confiscated.

A year later he was granted bail while investigation of his alleged links with the Achille Lauro affair continued.

The trial is expected to last at least two weeks.



CONGRATULATIONS: Prime Minister from ex-Premier Abdul Salam Majali and Sharif Zeid Ben Shakar and members of his cabinet on Monday receive congratulations



## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Mortar kills pro-Israeli militiaman

TEL AVIV (AFP) — A member of a pro-Israeli militia died and a Jewish soldier was lightly wounded during fighting with Islamic fundamentalist guerrillas in southern Lebanon on Monday, military officials said. Shelling killed the militiaman from the South Lebanon Army while the Israeli was hurt in an attack on the edge of the "security zone" Israel occupies in Lebanon. In Tyre, Lebanese police said the Hizbollah group fired 18 shells and 10 anti-tank rockets at an Israeli position near Rasaf, at the northern limit of the zone. Israeli artillery opened up in response lobbing some 40 shells on two villages under the sway of Hizbollah. Hizbollah issued a statement claiming it had inflicted heavy casualties when its guerrillas set off several bombs as an Israeli armoured patrol just one kilometre from the Lebanon-Israel border. "The 20 members of the patrol were killed and wounded in an exchange of fire which followed the explosions," the statement said. Hizbollah said the patrol included two personnel carriers, a tank and a mine-sweeping vehicle.

### Arafat laments lack of Palestinian 'Rothschild'

CAIRO (AFP) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat said Sunday the self-rule authority needed a rich Palestinian benefactor to help develop the autonomous areas, just as Zionism prospered from the aid of Baron Edmond de Rothschild before Israel came into being in 1948. "There are dozens of Palestinians as capable as Rothschild, but so far no Palestinian Rothschild has emerged," Mr. Arafat told the Saudi daily Al Sharq Al Awsat, published here Sunday. "Rich Palestinians have started coming forward" to help rebuild Gaza and Jericho, Mr. Arafat said, "but I expect more from them — they must join in the construction of the country of their children and grandchildren. He said the Palestinian Authority was holding talks with Palestinian businessmen. Mr. Arafat also lamented the failure of international donors to fulfil aid pledges to the Palestinians.

### Iran, S. Arabia agree ties need improving

NICOSIA (R) — A senior Iranian official was quoted on Monday as saying his country and Saudi Arabia agreed that relations were unsatisfactory and the two countries needed to boost strategic cooperation. First Deputy Foreign Minister Mohammad Hashemi Rafsanjani, a brother of Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, told the Iranian daily Jomhuri Islami he discussed ties with the Saudi Arabian envoy to Iran last week. "We also agree that the current relations between the two countries are not satisfactory," he told the daily in an interview published by the official Iranian news agency IRNA. "Bilateral relations should be enhanced to a logical level and that relations between Tehran and (Riyadh) should lead to long-term and strategic cooperation," he added. Ties between the two regional powers have been tense since Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution, deteriorating when Iran criticised Saudi Arabia's handling of the annual pilgrimage to holy sites in the Kingdom.

### Iranian navy holds manoeuvres in Gulf

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iranian Revolutionary Guards and the regular navy on Monday began sea diving exercises in the northern Gulf, officials said. The five-day manoeuvres, code-named "Abkavan-73," involved mainly mine-searching operations, underwater destruction and explosions as well as shore-launched attacks on the mock-enemy ships, they said. Iranian forces regularly stage war games in the Gulf and the Sea of Oman.

### Ex-minister Sharon calls for settlers to patrol roads

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Former Defence Minister Ariel Sharon called on Israeli settlers Sunday to form "volunteer" vigilante units to boost security on the West Bank. His plea came at the funeral of an Israeli woman from a Jewish settlement killed by Palestinians on Friday, on the main Jerusalem-Nabulus road. "Since the government does not want to or cannot fight terrorism as it should, we have to organise volunteers to monitor security along the main roads," Mr. Sharon told several thousand settlers at the funeral in Elon Moreh, in the north of the occupied West Bank. Settler representatives bitterly criticised the government of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, accusing of encouraging anti-Israeli attacks by signing the autonomy accords with the PLO.

## Egyptian police kill 3 suspected militants

ASSIUT (Agencies) — Egyptian police shot dead three youths thought to be Muslim militants in an exchange of fire in southern Egypt on Monday, security sources said.

The youths, aged 17, 20 and 22, had been hiding in an abandoned building in the middle of fields near Saw village in Assiut province about 280 kilometres south of Cairo.

Police believe they were members of the military wing of the militant Gamaa Al Islamiyah (Islamic Group), the largest organisation fighting the security forces, the sources said.

A police unit came across them while searching the fields and an exchange of fire broke out. In the building police found two automatic weapons, a revolver, a forged passport and money including U.S. dollars, they added.

The arrests said police thought the youths had recruited new members for the Gamaa and had handled contacts between Gamaa units in Assiut and those in other provinces along the Nile Valley as far north as Cairo.

In a shootout on the outskirts of Cairo on Sunday, police shot dead five suspected Muslim militants. It was the first operation against militants in the capital this year.

Later on Sunday gunmen shot dead a sugar factory worker in the south and security sources said they suspected militants attacked him in the belief he was collaborating with the police.

One woman passerby was injured in the attack, which took place in the village of Estay in Minya province, about 240 kilometres south of Cairo, they said.

The latest deaths bring the death toll from political violence in Egypt to about 700 since the Gamaa began a campaign to overthrow the government in 1992.

On Sunday, police arrested 18 suspected Islamic militants in Cairo, acting on information from militants on trial for the attempted murder of the author Naguib Mahfouz.

Police officials said 17 of the suspects were arrested in raids in the Medinet Nasr, Ain Shams and Maatariyah districts of Cairo.

Another suspect, Mohammad Rifai, was arrested in the south of the city as he distributed leaflets denouncing the detention of an Islamist journalist, Adel Hussein.

## France dismisses criticism against ties with Baghdad

PARIS (Agencies) — France on Monday rejected American and British criticism of its decision to open an interests section in Baghdad nearly four years after the Gulf war, saying both already had low-level links with Iraq.

We have been very surprised by the British and American comments at the announcement of the opening of a French interests section in Baghdad," French foreign ministry spokesman Richard Druge told reporters.

Washington and London expressed concern that Paris's decision last week might encourage Iraq to flout peace terms imposed after the 1991 Gulf war ejected Iraqi troops from Kuwait.

"An Iraqi interests section has been opened in London since 1991 while the Iraqi interests section opened in Paris only in September 1993," Mr. Druge said.

"The American reaction is even more astonishing as the United States itself has, in Baghdad since 1991, a set-up operating in the buildings of the U.S. embassy under the Polish flag," he said.

"The French interests section will be different only by the presence of a French diplomat with a very small staff," he said.

Last Friday Paris received a senior Iraqi leader, Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz, for the first time since the war and said it was opening the interests section in the Romanian embassy in Baghdad.

The U.S. State Department attacked the decision. "Now is not the time to make gestures towards Iraq," said spokeswoman Christine Shel-

ly. "We don't consider it helpful or constructive," she said.

In London, the "Foreign Office said: 'This is not the moment to relax the pressure on Iraq to comply fully with U.N. requirements,' adding: 'There has been no prior European Union coordination on reopening relations with Baghdad.'"

Mr. Druge said that "all European capitals were informed before the announcement of the French deci-

sion," as were Washington and countries in the region, notably Kuwait.

He noted that Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah was satisfied the decision would not affect relations between France and Kuwait and did not violate U.N. resolutions.

"The Kuwaiti minister declared, on the contrary, that this initiative could help to sort out certain points," Mr. Druge added, without elaborating.

Iraq was long a prime client for French arms and capital goods and owes Paris about \$5 billion. Baghdad is unable to earn hard currency to service its debt due to the U.N. embargo on its oil production.

In addition, French oil companies Total and ELF-Aquitaine have been negotiating deals with Iraq to help renew its oil industry once the oil production embargo is eased.

### 'Iraq contacts Israel'

Morocco has informed Israel that Iraq is prepared to "recognise" the Jewish state, a newspaper reported Monday.

King Hassan had forwarded a message from an Iraqi general who is in charge of Baghdad's negotiations with the United Nations, Israel's Haaretz daily said.

He had given the message to a Moroccan minister who recently visited Baghdad, the daily added.

According to Israel's military radio station, the message was transmitted through a liaison bureau which Israel opened in Rabat last year.

Government sources said several similar reports from Baghdad had reached Israel in recent weeks via other channels.

Israel and Iraq have both repeatedly denied reports of secret contacts between the two countries.

Iraqi President Saddam Hussein last week urged Arab states to resume the missile attacks he launched on Israel during the 1991 Gulf war.

## Donkey-cart explodes near W. Bank settlement

GAZA (Agencies) — A bomb exploded in a donkey cart as an Israeli bus passed it in the Gaza Strip on Monday just hours before Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres were to meet, Israeli security sources said.

No one aboard the bus was injured but Israeli troops put the cart's wounded driver under custody as he received medical treatment, the sources said.

The blast in the centre of Gaza came several hours before Mr. Arafat and Mr. Peres were to discuss the troubled Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) peace deal at the Erez crossing in the north of the Palestinian self-rule enclave of Gaza.

The sources said the bomb exploded when an Israeli bus guarded by border police passed the wagon south of the Kfar Darom Jewish settlement.

The beast died in the blast, Palestinian witnesses said.

An Israeli schoolbus was close to the explosion which shattered several windows in the vehicle although the passengers escaped unhurt, military officials said.

Witnesses said Palestinian

hardliners attached an explosive device to the donkey and sent it towards Morag.

The army sent reinforcements into the area between the Palestinian towns of Rafah and Khan Yunes and launched a manhunt, military officials said.

Palestinian hardliners have frequently used explosives, sometimes carried by suicide bombers, as part of their campaign against the Middle East peace process.

The army has repeatedly warned Israelis to beware of booby-trapped animals as well as suicide bombers.

Israeli soldiers guarding Kfar Darom blocked the main road and checked Arab cars.

Palestinian self-rule was set up in most of Gaza and in the West Bank town of Jericho in May. The interim PLO-Israeli peace deal providing autonomy allows Jewish settlements to remain in place.

Drawn-out negotiations have delayed the next stages of the peace deal — "Palestinian elections, Israeli troop redeployment away from Palestinian population centres in still-occupied areas of the West Bank and extension of self-rule to the rest of the West Bank.

## Sudanese try their hand in Afghan mediation

KABUL (AFP) — An Islamic delegation from Sudan has been meeting with leaders of warring Afghan factions to secure a peace settlement while U.N. special envoy Mahmud Mestiri separately continues his peace mission, officials said here Monday.

"They have common goals. Everyone, from the U.N. to individuals and groups, are trying to achieve peace in Afghanistan," said presidential press spokesman Abdul Aziz Morad.

At issue is the transfer of power from Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani, whose two-year term expired Dec. 28, and the establish-

ment of an interim government which must organise the national election of a future leader.

Asked what connection there was between Sudan and Afghanistan, Mr. Morad said: "Both peoples are Muslim and both governments are members of the U.N. and the Organisation of Islamic Conference."

The four-man Sudanese delegation headed by Sheikh Yasin Imam, includes Imam Hassan Omar, political advisor to the Sudanese president, Sudanese ambassador to Afghanistan Ibrahim Sulaiman, and a Syrian Islamist, Sa'aduddin.

## COLUMN

### U.S. freshmen apolitical, smoke more, drink less

WASHINGTON (AFP) —

First-year college students are less interested in politics than their peers in the past, are smoking more cigarettes and marijuana but drinking less, according to a survey released Sunday. The percentage of incoming freshmen who said that "keeping up with political affairs" was an important goal dropped to 31.9 per cent this year, the lowest percentage since the survey was started 29 years ago. A declining percentage said that community activism was important to them. Support for legalising marijuana rose for the fifth year, to 32.1 per cent, while interest in drinking beer, wine and hard liquor fell. A total of 53.2 per cent, an all-time low, reported drinking beer in the past year. That figure is down from 54.4 per cent in 1993 and 75.2 per cent in 1981. While incoming college students were more likely to drink alcohol than smoke cigarettes, smoking seemed to be on the rise. A total of 12.5 per cent of those surveyed in 1994 said they frequently smoked tobacco, up from 11.6 last year. In addition, many students reported feeling increasingly stressed. A total of 24.1 per cent said they "felt overwhelmed" and 9.5 per cent felt depressed. The survey of 333,703 students was done for the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California at Los Angeles.

### Faithful flock to graceland

MEMPHIS, Tennessee (R) — "It's an Elvis thing," said Dawn Smyth as she knelt and placed a birthday card, a teddy bear and a rose at the grave site of Elvis Presley, the king of rock 'n' roll. Smyth, who came from Chicago to acknowledge Presley's 60th birthday Sunday, said she is typical of Elvis fans who agree there is a special aura about the king's home. Her act of devotion was only one of many during a mass celebration at Graceland mansion, Presley's fabled home, honouring the late singer's 60th birthday. With a cake fit for a king awaiting them, nearly 5,000 fans descended on Memphis Friday for a three-day event. They sang happy birthday to their idol, ate from 17 sheet cakes, listened to Elvis music and snapped photos.

### U.S. high school principal heads for court

MONTGOMERY, Alabama (R) — A federal judge this week will be asked to decide the fate of a former Alabama high school principal who tried to ban interracial dating and allegedly called a mixed-race student "a mistake". The principal, Harold Humphries, thrust Randolph County High School and the tiny eastern Alabama hamlet of Wedowee into the national spotlight last February by threatening to cancel the annual high school dance if interracial couples planned to attend. The controversy forced the school board into a \$25,000 out-of-court settlement in June with former junior class president Revonda Bowen, who has a white father and a black mother and who maintains that Mr. Humphries called her "a mistake" during a school assembly. Mr. Humphries has emphatically denied the accusation. Racial tensions in Wedowee reached a new peak last August when arson destroyed the high school building and the national media flocked to the town to cover a federal investigation of the blaze. The Randolph County school board, which reassigned Mr. Humphries to an administrative job after a black television cameraman accused the principal of roughing him up, has since agreed with the U.S. Justice Department to bring school policies in line with outstanding court orders against racial segregation. However, the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) and a group of Randolph County parents, in a motion against the school board that has been joined by the Justice Department, are expected to ask U.S. district Judge Myron Thompson to fire Mr. Humphries.